

**A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE INFANCY NARRATIVES**  
**IN THE GOSPELS ACCORDING TO MATTHEW AND LUKE**

**BY**

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The study of Christology in the N.T. documents can be approached from a number of different directions; dogmatic, historical-critical; in terms of biblical theology, or with a hermeneutical priority. To avoid a projection of a Christology into the N.T. it is important that Christology should be grounded on a thorough exegesis of the text. Two recent critical methods which have helped to foster such a basis are redaction-criticism and structural analysis. While both methods have certain weaknesses a combination of these with the more traditional methods can produce a comprehensive 'systems' approach to the text. Such an approach is most likely to attain to the ideals which the biblical interpreter seeks to reach.

In our case a particular section of the N.T. has been chosen, namely the infancy narratives in Matthew and in Luke. The first requirement is an examination of the work that has already been done. This requirement is due to the absence of a comprehensive survey on the subject and the fact that different schools of thought have developed which often ignore each other. There is therefore a need for an exposure to the full spectrum of research.

The origins of research into these narratives may be traced to the enlightenment and the period of rationalism. This led to a reaction from conservative theologians. A fierce debate was provoked by these two schools of thought which had the positive result of raising all the critical issues. The study of the infancy narratives has unfortunately been somewhat blurred by a preoccupation with the doctrine of the virgin birth. Another area of preoccupation has been the linguistic origins of the Lucan infancy narrative. In more recent times the theory of midrashic creation has become popular. Redaction-criticism has brought the first step towards an exegesis of the infancy narratives which allows them to speak for themselves.

The historical survey of the investigation of the infancy narratives raises the issue of pre-suppositions, and in particular the question of historical method. No examination of these narratives is likely to be successful without a clear understanding of proper historical method. Broadly speaking there have been three main approaches.

The first was expressed in the period of the '*Quest for the historical Jesus*'. An examination of two crucial exponents of this approach, namely Ernst Troeltsch and Francis Herbert Bradley reveals that the difficulties encountered by this period are not those which are often mentioned. The principle of analogy and the principle of correlation as defined by this approach are grounded on certain philosophical presuppositions, and the historical method which results will never be able to deal adequately with the N.T. documents.

The second was initiated by Martin Kähler, whose views became influential in the dialecti-



cal movement. Kähler made a real attempt to face the problems, but his essentially pastoral concern has been misunderstood and his technical definition of history in the two categories of *Historie* and *Geschichte* has produced an escapist and dualistic historiography which presents as many problems as the *'Quest'*.

The third approach is still in the process of formulation. Three of its most able exponents are Richard Niebuhr, Wolfhart Pannenberg and John Montgomery. The re-definition of the historical method which is common to these scholars is one which places the resurrection in a central position as the criterion for proper historical method. Once a proper historical method has been formulated, a historical-critical examination of the infancy narratives is possible. The major issues in such a study are the use of the traditio-historical principle (whether positive or negative), the evidence of midrashic techniques in the narratives, the accentuation of the 'miraculous', the relationship between the narratives, historical analogies with the early Palestinian environment (before A.D.70), the status of Matt-  
 hean and Lucan theology and historiography, and their authorship and date. Such a study leads to the conclusion that while a positive historiographical verdict is not possible a negative verdict is equally excluded. This rather unsatisfactory conclusion indicates that the historical-critical approach is not enough. The question of meaning is left unanswered by most treatments of the narratives, including the most recent work by Raymond Brown. An approach is needed which can take the interpreter beyond the point which has been reached so far.

This is where redaction-criticism and structural analysis are able to make a real contribution. A structural analysis of the infancy narratives reveals that there are three fundamental motifs which run through each part of both narratives. These do not include the virgin birth, which has been the traditional perspective of study.

Firstly the narratives are thoroughly eschatological. By this we refer not to the immanent expectation of the parousia but to the arrival of the new age as the time of Messianic fulfilment. This motif is deeply embedded in every section. The narratives are inevitably misunderstood if this is not appreciated.

Secondly the narratives are Christological, but here it is vital to understand that the Christology of the narratives is grounded upon eschatology and proceeds from eschatology. It is not ontological. This is why the perspective of the virgin birth as an article of the creeds has been so unfruitful.

Thirdly the narratives are prophetic. The coming of the new age, primarily in the Messianic figure himself, produces a crisis of challenge and response in the semic personages of the narratives. Their responses to this crisis are presented in a manner which indicates that the

tradition was initially shaped and moulded by early Christian prophets who were primarily concerned with a ministry of exhortation to the believing community.

The narratives may be regarded as prophetic in a number of ways. Prophetic utterances appear in Lk.1-2. The midrashic method was probably associated with the prophets of the early church. The view of redemptive history is prophetic. The emphasis on existential response and exhortation is prophetic. These elements point to a prophetic transmissional Sitz im Leben for both narratives.

The eschatology of the narratives is viewed from a prophetic perspective. This has implication for any understanding of eschatology. This particular type holds a careful balance between realised and consistent eschatology which supports the synthetic view of N.T. eschatology in general.

The approach to the person of Christ from the perspective of both the prophetic and the eschatological has important lessons for Christological study in general. This approach may be fruitful in other areas of N.T. study. It may in fact be indispensable for a proper understanding of Christology.

Once this structural and redactional treatment of the narratives has been completed, and the prophetic, eschatological and Christological nature of the narratives has been discovered, a rather different estimation of their historicity becomes possible. Not only does the thorough exegesis and understanding of the narratives give grounds for a positive estimation of their historicity, but their perspective challenges the interpreter to a fresh approach to history, a personal confrontation with the age to come, and a new understanding of existence.

**DEDICATED TO MY FAMILY**

**Personal - Karin and Shean**

**Parental - Jeff and Joyce**

**Communal - The body of Christ**

My first interest in the infancy narratives arose during my undergraduate work at Rhodes University. The minister of our local congregation, Noel Cromhout once used the principal figures in the narratives as 'types' of how men in general respond to the proclamation of the Gospel. I was struck by this use of the narratives in contrast to the usual homiletic which celebrates the birth of Christ. The development of my own preaching activity merely strengthened the conviction that these narratives were very often misused or misunderstood. An examination of the various commentaries merely accentuated this feeling. A further motivating factor towards my fascination with these chapters has been the emphasis on worship in the current renewal movement throughout the church in South Africa. This has given a contemporary background to the study of chapters whose *Sitz im Leben* Paul Minear has described as the '*holy of holies*' of the early church.

On the critical level the stimulus for this study has come through the development of the recent methods of redaction-criticism and structural analysis. Both these methods are an attempt to go beyond the level which is usually attained through historical-critical and form-critical methods. The work of a number of scholars has also been a particular stimulus; the work of Howard Marshall in the area of Lucan studies, the work of Jack Kingsbury in Matthean studies, the analysis of the infancy narratives by Paul Minear, the work of Earle Ellis on prophecy and hermeneutics in the early church, and the writings of George Ladd on the subject of eschatology. The recent monumental work on the infancy narratives by Raymond Brown has proved to be invaluable as a source material, although his particular approach to the subject has merely accentuated the feeling that these narratives have still not been properly understood.

A few practical notes will be of assistance to the reader. A study of this nature inevitably involves a vast amount of detail. An attempt has been made to put most of this detail into the notes. However the following notes may be regarded as more significant than most: chapter two, 71, 75, 78, 88, 89, 122; chapter three, 32, 87, 88, 110, 132, 135; chapter four, 81, 86, 103, 135, 171, 239, 258, 263, 267, 375, 378, 403, 433. The system of notation is as follows. Full bibliographical references are given in the bibliography. In the notes the title is mentioned when a work is first quoted, and thereafter the authors name followed by *op.cit.*, or if an author has more than one work referred to the name and an abbreviation of the title followed by *op.cit.* Titles of articles are written in *italics* throughout. The titles of books are written in bold. Quotations are in *italics*. Words in other languages are in bold. Due to the limitations of type-setting no punctuation is given to Greek.

Of the many who have helped in this study the following deserve special thanks. They are

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CHAPTER SIX

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AHG    | Apostolic History and the Gospel, ed. W.Ward Gasque et al. |
| Bib    | Biblica  |
| BS     | Bibliotheca Sacra  |
| BJRL   | Bulletin of the John Rylands Library.                      |
| BT     | Bible Today  |
| BTr    | Bible Translator   |
| CBQ    | Catholic Biblical Quarterly                                |
| CQR    | Church Quarterly Review                                    |
| CR     | Clergy Review  |
| CT     | Christianity Today   |
| EQ     | Evangelical Quarterly                                      |
| ET     | Expository Times   |
| ICC    | International Critical Commentary                          |
| Int    | Interpretation   |
| JAAR   | Journal of American Academic Religion                      |
| JBL    | Journal of Biblical Literature                             |
| JQR    | Jewish Quarterly Review                                    |
| JTS    | Journal of Theological Studies                             |
| NICNT  | New International Commentary on the New Testament          |
| NICOT  | New International Commentary on the Old Testament          |
| NLCNT  | New London Commentary on the New Testament                 |
| NIDNTT | New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology     |
| NTS    | New Testament Studies                                      |
| R&E    | Review and Expositor                                       |
| SJT    | Scottish Journal of Theology                               |
| SLA    | Studies in Luke-Acts, ed. L.E.Keck et al.                  |
| TDNT   | Theological Dictionary of the New Testament                |
| TS     | Theological Studies  |
| ZEB    | Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible              |
| ZNTW   | Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft             |

## DIAGRAMS

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Traditionally the study of Christology in the N.T. documents has been pursued along the lines of the dogmatic formulations of the church. Each article of the Nicene or Apostles' Creed has been examined in turn. This approach still has its place in modern research.<sup>1</sup> Developing out of this we find the classical dogmatic approach which examines the state of Humiliation, the state of Exaltation, the Prophetic, Priestly and Kingly offices of Christ and the Atonement.<sup>2</sup> It is now recognised that this approach is in danger of projecting a system into the N.T. documents. Accordingly it has become customary to make a study of each of the titles of Christ.<sup>3</sup> Such a study can go to some lengths, so that each title is studied in the Palestinian environment, the environment of Hellenistic Judaism and the environment of the Hellenistic Gentile Church.<sup>4</sup> Even this cannot be regarded as being entirely satisfactory. There is the danger that the particular title will be understood in abstraction from the actual fabric of the N.T. documents. This has led to the attempt at constructing a Christology on the basis of fundamental biblical theological themes. In this method a particular biblical principle is used as a key to the understanding of the theology of the N.T. Thus for instance D.M. Baillie has approached the subject from the perspective of the Incarnation, the Barthian school has constructed its Christology on the principle of revelation, and Oscar Cullman has explored the idea of *Heilsgechichte*.<sup>5</sup>

These approaches continue to be fruitful. However, once again, we are not able to entirely escape the possibility of imposing some principle of our own upon the documents. Further, those who have adopted these methods of Christological study have not always taken sufficient note of the monumental work of Johannes Weiss, confirmed and consolidated by Albert Schweitzer.<sup>6</sup> If any single principle is to unveil the N.T. understanding of Christology then it is the Jewish concept of eschatology. In addition no Christology can afford to neglect the central place of the resurrection in the development of N.T. Christology. In this regard the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg has made a real contribution to N.T. research because it approaches the subject from the perspective of the resurrection as an eschatological event.<sup>7</sup>

All the approaches which we have mentioned fall, in some measure, under the category of systematic Christology. In distinction from this there has been the development of N.T. study along the lines of source-criticism, form-criticism, redaction-criticism, and now structural criticism. In the source-critical analysis of the N.T. each source is examined in turn and its basic theological motifs are analysed. These conclusions are then used for the formulation of Christological models. A typical study along these lines is the recent work of

G.E. Ladd.<sup>8</sup> The advantage of this approach is that it needs to follow the text more closely. It is by nature more exegetically orientated. Form-criticism has emphasized the development of the different traditions. This method has become widely used. The danger of both source-criticism and form-criticism is that these methods have tended to fragment the documents, and the understanding of the original authors has been lost in the investigation of the theology of the sources. Redaction-criticism has been a healthy reaction to this approach. With this method the text is closely followed and the understanding of the original authors is carefully scrutinised. The Christological conclusions which follow from such a study are more likely to arise from the text itself. It therefore has advantages which none of the other methods have. Yet even with redaction-criticism there is the danger that the editorial activity becomes so important that the text itself is lost in the details of redactional processes. Structural-criticism or structural analysis is a recent discipline which provides a healthy balance in this area. By focusing its attention on the text in itself as opposed to the situation or activity of the author, or even the vantage point of the modern reader, structural analysis makes a serious attempt to understand the text for its own sake. It asks not '*how did it appear?*' (historical-criticism; source-criticism; form-criticism; redaction-criticism) or '*What is it about?*' (hermeneutics) but '*how is it made?*' The text is understood from the perspective of its structural inter-relationships. This method therefore has advantages of its own which are not found in the other methods. However it has certain weaknesses which make it imperative for us to use this method in conjunction with the other, more traditional approaches to the text of the N.T.<sup>9</sup>

For this reason we will adopt what has been termed a 'systems' approach to the interpretation of the N.T. The underlying assumption behind a systems approach is that meaning need not exist on only one level when it comes to the interpretation of texts. A text may have significant meanings on the level of historical-criticism, structural analysis, or existential hermeneutics. A comprehensive approach to the N.T., where all these methods are used together, will be most likely to come to a thorough grasp of the material under study.<sup>10</sup> At the most basic level the N.T. scholar will be involved with the method of source-criticism. This study will then become the basis of a biblical theological formulation involving redactional and structural methods, and this in turn will be used by the systematic theologian in the formulation of normative belief. This in turn, will ultimately relate to the various confessional formulations of the church.

This thesis is an attempt to ground Christology on an exegesis of the text. It would of course be impossible to include the entire field of the N.T. Consequently one area has been chosen,

namely the infancy narratives of Matt. 1 - 2 and Lk. 1 - 2. The thesis attempts to be conscious of proper methodology. The infancy narratives are a case in point where the entire process of scholarly investigation can be involved. On the most basic level we will begin with the critical issues of textual and historical-criticism. This will then lead to the exegesis of the text. At this point we will be involved with the methods of redaction-criticism and structural analysis. Finally the conclusions of the exegetical study will be related to the broader issue of systematic Christology.

It is important that the study of Christology should give due weight to each of these stages. If one particular stage is emphasised to the partial exclusion of another then a distorted picture will emerge. For instance, if the critical-historical aspect of the work is emphasised then the resulting Christology will tend to be technical and lifeless. On the other hand if the dogmatic element is emphasised the possibility exists of the resulting Christology being unbalanced and not giving a true reflection of N.T. theology. A Christology may be read into the documents. The problem of subjective 'pictures' of Christ is not a new one. Enough weight must therefore be given to the exegesis of the text. This exegesis will be based upon a critical examination of the text and will produce the materials for a correct understanding of Christology.

In order to bring the major issues into focus the second chapter deals with the history of the investigation of the infancy narratives. While others have covered the history of investigation our analysis of the subject is from a particular perspective. Our purpose is to examine in particular the questions that have been put to the infancy narratives. Three basic approaches to the infancy narratives emerge, the dogmatic, the historical-critical and the hermeneutical. Previous scholarship has laid great emphasis on the first two approaches. While they have their importance it is a striking fact that very little has been done to investigate the infancy narratives from their own perspective and to discover which particular questions are appropriate for this particular field of study.

The survey reveals that an issue which is particularly relevant to the investigation of the infancy narratives is that of presuppositions. Estimations of these narratives vary widely amongst N.T. scholars. While some believe that they are part of the most primitive strata of the tradition and reflect the environment of the early Palestinian community, others are persuaded that they reflect the speculative ability of the Hellenistic community to make use of the material of the Septuagint and various Hellenistic myths to forge a synthetic narrative of meagre historical or theological value. The reason for such diverse views is not a lack of scholarship on the part of the various students of the infancy narratives. Scholars of great reputation can be found giving their weight to almost every position. Neither is it the lack of research into these particular narratives. The great wealth of literature on the subject is



sufficient to dispel such an idea. The problem lies in the area of presuppositions and methods. Methods are often used without clear definition and the differing use of the same methods usually reflects differing presuppositions. This thesis therefore attempts to be epistemologically and methodologically self-conscious. Considerable attention is given to the definition of historical probability, since it has become evident that this is the vital presuppositional issue which has affected the investigation of the infancy narratives.

In the third chapter attention is given to three basic approaches to the historical-critical method and its bearing on the N.T. documents. Firstly there are those who have unreservedly accepted the philosophy expressed in historicism. Their perspective is '*strictly historical*'. In this case the infancy narratives must be approached for the primary purpose of ascertaining the historical origins of the various traditions and any elements which do not fit into the assumptions of historical-critical research must be rejected as non-historical and legendary. Secondly there are those in the dialectical movement who have reacted to the negative results of historicism, especially in the sense that the theological meaning of the N.T. is lost when it is approached from a rigid historical-critical perspective. However this school of thought does not feel it can reject the assumptions of the historical-critical method because they are part of our modern 'scientific' world view. Consequently it has adopted a dualistic definition of history where strict historicity is discussed in the one area (**Historie**), and redemptive or meaningful history is discussed in the other (**Geschichte**). Thirdly, more recently there are those who are unhappy with both previous approaches. They reject a dualistic view of history as being untenable and inconsistent. Instead of merely accepting all the assumptions of historicism they believe that the historical-critical method should be critically examined and re-defined from the perspective of the Christian faith, and particularly from the perspective of the resurrection. In our discussion we will give reasons for supporting the third view and will indicate that due to various connections between the resurrection narratives and the infancy narratives this redefinition of historical method is vital for the examination of the infancy narratives.

In terms of hermeneutics the infancy narratives have been traditionally examined from two perspectives. On the one hand they have been examined from a predominantly dogmatic perspective. The overriding question has always been the doctrine of the virgin birth. On the other hand the narratives have been examined from an historical-critical perspective. Here the historicity of the narratives has been the overriding factor. The latter interest has arisen out of the former. These two approaches have been the result of two basic approaches to the N.T. documents. Before the rise of modern N.T. research the N.T. documents were studied as sources of doctrine. From this vantage point one basic question was addressed to the infancy narratives; What did they have to say about the virgin birth of Jesus? Did they

substantiate or did they deny the articles of the creeds? This is still essentially the question which Karl Barth addresses to the narratives.<sup>11</sup> With the development of N.T. research the N.T. documents were examined with a basically biographical interest. This was the great interest of the nineteenth century. Here the question of historicity became paramount. One question was addressed to the infancy narratives; how did they tell the story of Christ's birth? It is now generally acknowledged that neither of these two questions is entirely appropriate. The N.T. documents are not a text book of theological statements. Neither are the Gospels attempts to write a biography of Christ. More recently a third question has come to be regarded as appropriate to this area of enquiry; that is, what does the text have to offer in terms of the kerygmatic proclamation of the faith of the early church? Most sections of the N.T. have been examined from the vantage point of this question. Clearly the discovery of the correct question is fundamental. If the documents are not, for instance, primarily concerned with dogmatic formulations, or the narration of historical facts, then the dogmatic or biographical questions will lead to a meagre reply. Worse, the narratives may actually be misunderstood. In this regard it is particularly unfortunate that while the remainder of the Gospel material has been approached in great detail from the perspective of the third question (i.e. kerygmatic proclamation) the infancy narratives have continued to be approached from the perspective of the first two questions. This is evident from the major works on the subject.<sup>12</sup> So far little attempt has been made to address the infancy narratives with the third question. It has always been presumed that the dogmatic and biographical questions are quite appropriate. What if they are not? What if the infancy narratives are really concerned with an entirely different question which is not even concerned with kerygmatic proclamation? It is our thesis that this is in fact the case. The correct question must be discovered in the narratives themselves. They must be exegeted from their own point of view. Such an exegesis will then lead to conclusions which may make a contribution to Christology. This alternative question will become evident in the fifth chapter.

When the infancy narratives are analysed from a structural perspective it becomes obvious that their main thrust is not in the area of history, biography, Incarnational doctrine or even traditional Christology. Their real concern is in three areas namely, eschatological fulfilment, Christology, and what we have termed prophetic exhortation. The Christology which we have discovered in these narratives differs from traditional theological conceptions in the sense that it is expressed in eschatological rather than ontological terms. The prophetic exhortation which is found in the infancy narratives reflects the particular type of prophetic activity associated with the prophets which were active in the early Christian communities.

This does not mean that the infancy narratives are without an historical or biographical interest. The historical issue is certainly not central but neither is it totally disregarded. The question of historicity will not therefore be laid aside. Consequently the fourth chapter will be concerned with the historiographical question. In the last chapter the results of the historical-critical examination will be related to the results of the exegetical study. This combination will lead to the theological implications of the infancy narratives. These implications will define the type of Christology that is found in the narratives.

## THE DOGMATIC APPROACH TO THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

The issue over which the critical investigation of the infancy narratives may be said to have arisen was the doctrine of the virgin birth. Prior to the Enlightenment, the dogmas of the Church were accepted without question. The Enlightenment however, brought with it a reaction to such dogmas, which were felt to have tyrannised the freedom of human reason. Consequently, almost as a matter of course, every established Church dogma was brought under critical judgment. This may be said, in particular, for the virgin birth with its '*supernatural*' connotations.

The questioning of the doctrine of the virgin birth led to a detailed assessment of the infancy narratives. Most of the issues which developed later can be traced, in one way or another, to this period. Conservative apologists were immediately drawn in by way of reaction and the detailed negative assessment of the narratives was therefore complemented by the detailed positive defence of the narratives. Without directly aiding the process of biblical theology, the Enlightenment did supply the initial spark which became, in time, the source of constructive biblical criticism.

The Enlightenment in Europe was closely associated with the Deistic period in Britain.<sup>1</sup> Albert Schweitzer's well known analysis of modern attempts to write the Life of Jesus begins with H.S. Reimarus (1694-1768).<sup>2</sup> The latter was one of the first to radically question the N.T. He believed Jesus, with John the Baptist, was bent on political revolution. When his plans did not materialise, the disciples created the doctrine of the resurrection and the second coming.<sup>3</sup> As foundational to his views, Reimarus denied the possibility of miracles, and believed the N.T. accounts of such claims to have been written long after the events took place.<sup>4</sup>

This general idea was extended to every '*miraculous*' element in the N.T. The English Deist, Thomas Paine (1737-1809), for instance, associated the supernatural manner in which the N.T. writers had '*brought Him into the world*' with the similar manner in which they were obliged to '*take Him out again*'. Both were to be equally rejected.<sup>5</sup> Once the N.T. stories were seriously questioned, other problems began to emerge. The genealogies in Matthew and Luke are hopelessly contradictory. The account of the virgin birth represents a '*direct incorporation*' from '*heathen mythology*'. Mark and John are silent about the virgin birth. In Matthew the angel appears to Joseph, in Luke to Mary.<sup>6</sup>

Initially, the supernatural elements were regarded as exaggerations which had developed from historical material. Thus, for instance, H.E.G. Paulus (1761-1851) sought to explain

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE HISTORY OF THE INVESTIGATION OF THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

This chapter will examine three basic approaches to the infancy narratives, the dogmatic, historical and hermeneutical approaches. The first two are closely interrelated. Historically, the initial interest was dogmatic. This was because the Enlightenment led to a critical assessment of all the dogmas of the Church. The moment the dogma of the virgin birth was investigated the infancy narratives came into view, and here historical-critical issues were paramount. However, as the infancy narratives were critically examined, the historical-critical issues raised theological questions about the relationship between the virginal conception and other Christological formulas. Dogma and history were thus woven together. We will approach the dogmatic issue first, but will outline how the historical-critical interest gave rise to the particular dogmatic problems attached to the infancy narratives.

The aim of the chapter is two-fold. Firstly, we wish to raise the major issues that are involved in the critical investigation of the infancy narratives. The criterion of selection will be to deal with works that specialise in a particular subject, or give a good indication of views held by a particular school or approach or period. It will be found that some issues have more or less exhausted themselves. In such a case it will not be necessary to do more than assume the end result in later chapters. In other cases it will be found that a scholarly consensus has been reached. This can be used as the basis of our subsequent investigation. Many issues are still very much alive and will need to be dealt with in the ensuing chapters. Our own views will largely be left until the fourth chapter where more recent scholarship will be taken into account as well. The reader should assume therefore that the views of other writers are being reflected in this chapter unless our own comments are obviously expressed.

Secondly, the aim of this chapter is to indicate why a fresh approach is required. Despite the relative importance of the dogmatic and historical approaches, the hermeneutical approach remains a primary concern, and the history of the investigation of the infancy narratives reveals that this approach has not been fully explored.

The period covered will be roughly from the Enlightenment to the present. The major commentaries and journal articles of the last decade or so will be dealt with in the fourth chapter, where a critical examination of each pericope will be made.

how some of the stories of the miraculous arose from the superstitious reactions of primitive people. Zechariah had an ecstatic vision in the temple and his dumbness could be explained as a psychosomatic condition. Mary was built up to a pitch of excitement by Elizabeth. This caused her womb to contract - and Simeon had a dream about the coming of the Messiah.<sup>7</sup>

However, D.F. Strauss (1808-1874) felt it was a half measure to take such an approach. The legendary, or mythical, elements were not simply to be found here and there. No such distinction between original facts and later exaggerations was possible. The supernatural formed the very substance of the narratives. The ancient documents were thoroughly mythical.<sup>8</sup> The virgin birth presented two problems for Strauss, the physio-theological and the exegetical-historical. By the former he meant that the exclusion of Joseph as a parent still left Mary as a human parent to Jesus. How could this be the basis of his sinlessness, if his sinlessness was to be physiologically grounded? <sup>9</sup> Thus, while the original doubts which were raised about the virgin birth were on the historical level, questions on the theological level arose as well. Was the virgin birth, as an article of the creed, *'really indispensable for a proper Christology which adhered to Christ's sinlessness, divinity and atonement?'*<sup>10</sup> This question, raised by Paul Lobstein (1890), well expresses the issue on the theological front. In essence, the problem raised and discussed by numerous scholars up to our time, revolves around the connection between the virginal conception and other Christological doctrines which are normally regarded as being essential; the pre-existence of Christ, the Incarnation, his sinlessness, and his divinity.

According to the Augustinian theory, the virgin birth establishes Christ's sinlessness in terms of original sin. Lobstein gives five reasons to question such an assumption.

1. The connection between Christ's sinlessness and the virginal conception is unsupported by the text. The Holy Spirit is merely mentioned as the creative power of God, as in Old Testament terminology. The holiness of the child is not based upon the holiness of the Spirit.<sup>11</sup>
2. No other N.T. passage connects the virgin birth with Christ's sinlessness.
3. The exclusion of the sinful human father still leaves the presence of the sinful human mother.
4. What is actually required is a line of descent from Eve to Mary where sin is excluded.
5. The Augustinian doctrine of original sin casts a slur upon sex and natural procreation.

The connection between the virgin birth and the Incarnation must be equally questioned, for the simple fact that the infancy narratives never mention the Incarnation or the pre-existence of Christ, and those passages in the N.T. which are concerned with such doctrines never mention the virgin birth.<sup>12</sup> The physiological pre-occupation of the infancy narratives tends to lower the moral quality of Christ's divinity, and tends to lead to the unfortunate scholastic doctrine of the two natures. Worst of all, it tends to undermine Christ's real humanity. Surely, to be fully human, Christ must be born as we are. The '*official doctrine*' makes him a '*stranger to our race*'.<sup>13</sup>

The writers we have mentioned so far provided the thesis, as it were, in regard to the critical investigation of the N.T. documents. They were part of what Thomas Boslooper had described as '*naturalistic philosophical interpretation*'. Others who could be mentioned would be K.F. Bahrdt and K.H. Venturini as contemporaries of Paulus, and the influence of Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel and F.E.D. Schleiermacher should be remembered as background to the new departure of Strauss.<sup>14</sup> The antithesis in reaction to the rationalistic approach came in two waves. Firstly, various continental scholars sought to counter rationalistic interpretation, such as H. Olshausen (1796-1839), J.A.W. Neander (1789-1850, or Mendel), H.A. Ebrard (1818-1888) and J.P. Lange (1802-1882).<sup>15</sup> The reaction in the English speaking world came slightly later, for instance from the Anglo-Catholic Charles Gore (1895), from the American scholar C.A. Briggs (1908), and from the conservative apologist James Orr (1907).<sup>16</sup> At the turn of the century and for the next few decades a spate of works on the virgin birth appeared from various approaches.<sup>17</sup> Interest in the doctrine of the virgin birth then tended to diverge into various specialised approaches during the 1920's and 1930's, with Gresham Machen representing the high water mark of conservative apologetics, Emil Brunner and Karl Barth continuing the thesis and antithesis of the earlier period within the Neo-orthodox movement, and scholars such as Rudolf Bultmann, Martin Dibelius and Adolf Harnack taking the study of the infancy narratives into the various critical methods of N.T. investigation.<sup>18</sup>

The apologetic arguments did tend to narrow down the number of theological questions about the virgin birth. The thought that the doctrine undermines the true humanity of Christ has however remained a live issue, as evidenced by the views of Brunner. As with Lobstein, he makes it clear that he has no intention of raising questions about the Incarnation. This is an indispensable doctrine as it expresses the movement of grace from God to man. The same cannot be said for the idea of the virgin birth, which tends to obscure the meaning of '*this amazingly glorious message*'.<sup>19</sup> If the Son of God assumed our '*whole humanity*', he would have needed to take to himself, '*all that is human, and all that lies within the sphere of space and time. Procreation through the sexes forms part of human life*'.<sup>20</sup> To deny this is to support a Docetic approach. The connection between the virgin birth and Christ's sinlessness has perhaps more justification for Brunner, but he questions why it should be difficult

for God to create a sinless God-man through the natural process of human procreation.

As we have already noted, with these writers the infancy narratives were approached with prior theological questions in mind rather than with fundamentally exegetical interests. The reaction to and defence of ecclesiastical dogmas was the overriding concern, especially in the earlier period. Augustine's doctrine of original sin, the Chalcedonian doctrine of the two natures and the articles of the Apostles and Nicean creeds were all more or less associated with the infancy narratives as equally problematic.

Those who defended these beliefs made similar equations. Gore pointed out that the first to deny the virgin birth was Cerinthus, who had gnostic views.<sup>21</sup> Briggs pointed out that those who wanted to dissociate the physiological aspect of the Incarnation from the ethical reality of the Incarnation were repeating, in essence, the doctrine propounded by Paul of Samosata, according to which the divine Son of God inhabited the man Jesus, causing a merely ethical union between the two.<sup>22</sup> For Briggs the rejection of the Chalcedonian formulation on the grounds of scholastic philosophy was not well motivated. Modern philosophy is as much a factor in the thinking of biblical scholars who question the virgin birth, and philosophy is ever changing. Why reject the philosophical basis to Chalcedon only to replace it with another set of non-biblical philosophical assumptions?<sup>23</sup>

While those who questioned the virgin birth asked why it had to be connected with other, more essential Christological doctrines, those who defended the doctrine argued exactly in reverse. Once one has accepted the essential Christological doctrines of his divinity, sinlessness and Incarnation, why need one reject the virgin birth? In fact, given these doctrines, the virginal conception becomes a necessity. Gore argued that the coming of the sinless Christ to save a sinful humanity demanded a completely new moral departure. This argument Gore felt, was grounded upon a proper approach to anthropology. If one has a true understanding of the relation of spirit and body, one is led to the belief that *'the miracle of the new moral creation'* must mean the miracle of a new physical creation.<sup>24</sup> Briggs agreed that the avoidance of the transmission of sin from human parents need not require a virgin birth. God could have done it otherwise, but if God is sovereign, why may he not have chosen to avoid the transmission of sin by avoiding the human father?<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps clearest of all in his apologetic reversal of the critical argument was Orr. Instead of asking, *'Does the virgin birth create his sinlessness?'*, he asks, *'Does the sinlessness imply a virgin birth?'* The former question must be answered negatively, the latter positively. This is supported by Johannine and Pauline theology. According to John, human nature needs regeneration. Jesus is without sin, and yet John never conceives of him as requiring regeneration. This requires a miraculous birth, or generation for Jesus. Similarly, Paul's concept of the sinfulness of the first Adam requires a radically new beginning for the second Adam.<sup>26</sup>



Orr also denied that there was no textual basis for a connection between the virgin birth and Christ's pre-existence or sinlessness. The force of the 'therefore' (*δω*) in Luke 1.35 connects the conception by the Holy Spirit with Christ's unique sonship. Further, he is said to be 'great' and the '*Son of the Most High*'. This terminology lacks explicit reference to pre-existence because it is found in documents that were written prior to the full realisation of the person of Christ, but it nevertheless forms a basis for subsequent Christological formulation.<sup>27</sup>

The argument that the virgin birth undermines Christ's true humanity was also reversed. Douglas Edwards based his argument on the presuppositions which would have applied in a Jewish monotheistic environment. In such an environment, he argued, given the solidarity of the human race in sin and the sinlessness of Christ, the absence of the virgin birth would lead to a denial of Christ's true humanity.<sup>28</sup>

Enough has been said to show how the argument could continue without really being resolved. When one turns to Barth one finds what, in our view, is the most balanced and sophisticated approach to the subject. Here a real attempt is made to grasp the theological heart of the infancy narratives. Although, like so many, he approaches them with dogmatic interests, his conclusions have a genuine relationship with the text.

The virgin birth should not be placed on the same level as other Christological formulas. It '*denotes not so much the Christological reality of revelation as the mystery of that revelation*'.<sup>29</sup> He uses as an analogy the relationship between the sign of the empty tomb and the fact of the resurrection. It may be possible to believe in the fact, without believing in the sign, but the first witnesses came to know the fact through the sign. So too, the fact of the Incarnation is known through the sign of the virginal conception. God has seen fit to give this sign, as with the sign of the empty tomb. It is only God's sign, and yet it is also God's sign. The Church is therefore not at liberty to make it an optional doctrine. In a sense those who attack the virgin birth also attack the resurrection. The two signs go together as the beginning and the end. '*The mystery at the beginning is the basis of the mystery at the end and by the mystery of the end, the mystery of the beginning becomes active and knowable*'.<sup>30</sup>

Brunner criticises the doctrine because instead of being satisfied with the that of the Incarnation it seeks a biological explanation of the how. But Barth points out that in the narratives, '*The sign itself was always left as free of explanation as possible*'.<sup>31</sup>

The credal formula has two statements, '*Conceived by the Holy Spirit*' and '*Born of the virgin Mary*'. Instead of the apologetic reversal of previous writers, Barth uses a dialectical concept. The fact and the sign contribute to each other. The conception is not the foundation of the

Incarnation - the Incarnation is the foundation of the conception. Yet, the *'miracle bears witness to the mystery, and the mystery is attested by the miracle'*.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Jesus was not the new Adam because he was born of a virgin. God could have become sinless man in another way. Because he was the new Adam he was born of a virgin. Yet he was born of a virgin, *'that ye may know'* (Mk.2.10) that he was the second Adam.<sup>33</sup>

The conception by the Holy Spirit is a reference to God in His freedom to act as the Sovereign One, the Lord or Lords. This sets it apart from pagan mythology and all ideas of parthenogenesis. The virginal conception, within certain limits, states the true humanity of Jesus. He did not pass through the body of Mary, as taught by the gnostics and docetists. The doctrine therefore denies, rather than affirms, docetic views.<sup>34</sup> In this clause is also contained a *'judgment upon man'*. Man has lost his *'pure creativeness'* not in the sense that human sexuality is sinful, but because it is a sign so often of man in his own willing, working, achieving and creating. Masculinity in particular, seems to show forth human rebellion. Therefore Joseph had to be set aside. In the great act of redemption, man cannot assist God. He can only watch, and receive. Neither should Mary be glorified as something special. She too is a member of the fallen race. Her response of submission and praise is a sign of man's inability to do anything for himself.

A few comments on some of the issues raised will bring this section to a close. The question of the exegetical basis for a connection between the virgin birth and other Christological formulas will be discussed further in the fourth chapter. At this point we merely wish to indicate that a denial of any such exegetical basis, as suggested by Lobstein is, in our view, an overstatement. On the other hand Edward's suggestion that the absence of the virgin birth would have led to a denial of Christ's humanity seems to be equally overstated. He argues from the Jewish theological environment, yet one of Machen's arguments in support of the historicity of the tradition is that the idea of the virginal conception could never have arisen spontaneously in a Jewish monotheistic environment. The idea of God Himself begetting a child in the womb of a woman would have been abhorrent to first century Jews.<sup>35</sup> Who knows how the Jews would have conceived of the physiological aspect of the Incarnation if no existing tradition had been forthcoming?

In connection with the issue of Christ's true humanity, the question of a proper anthropology, as mentioned by Orr, is important. A radical separation of the ethical and physiological aspects of the Incarnation runs the risk of being an expression of the separation of body and spirit, which is more Hellenistic than biblical.

Our main observation with regards to the dogmatic discussion is to point out how so much of the argument revolved around and over the infancy narratives. So little seems to have

taken place in terms of the infancy narratives themselves.

## THE HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

An interest in the dogma of the virgin birth initiated enquiry into the historical foundation of the virgin birth. We have noted how the approach to the N.T. brought about by the Enlightenment played its part in the initial stages. Once the historicity was open to debate, a number of areas of study began to open to enquiry. Were the two infancy narratives consistent with each other? Were they originally part of their respective gospels? Were they consistent with the remainder of the N.T.? What were the sources of the infancy narratives? With the Lucan infancy narrative, this question produced a vast field of research in the area of the linguistic sources, the presence or absence of an identifiable Baptist source, and the possible presence of various poetic and prose sources. The particular nature and structure of Matthew's infancy narrative raised the question of Jewish midrashic methods of exegesis. Once this had been raised in Matthew's narrative it was not long before a similar approach was used with Luke.

Behind these critical issues was always the prior thought of the virginal conception. The historical-critical enquiry needed to find some answer to the origin of this tradition. Did it arise from pagan mythology, or Jewish midrashic interpretations and folk lore? Was it perhaps created as a theologoumenon by the primitive Jewish or Hellenistic Church, or did it come from an historical tradition emanating from the family of Jesus?

These questions raised the whole subject of myth. How was myth to be defined? Was this really the correct literary description of the material? The question about myth tended gradually to develop into the question of midrash. If the infancy narratives were more correctly defined as midrash, how was midrash to be defined?

Most writers of course discussed most of these subjects together. For our purposes, it will be helpful to sub-divide the historical enquiry into its constituent parts - to save unnecessary repetition and to bring the different questions into focus. It must be borne in mind however that the various issues are often so interrelated that it is sometimes difficult to dissociate them.

**The relationship between the two infancy narratives**

We begin here because the first critics found problems in this area to be the most obvious. We have noted Pain's reference to the genealogies and the differences in the two narratives. Strauss raised the major difficulties. The number of generations differ in the two genealogies between David and Jesus. In Luke, Heli is Joseph's father, in Matthew, it is Jacob. Luke traces his genealogy through Nathan, Matthew through Solomon.<sup>36</sup> In Matthew the announcer is called *'the angel of the Lord'*, in Luke he is *'Gabriel'*. In Matthew he comes to Joseph, in Luke to Mary. Matthew experiences a dream, Mary is awake. In Matthew the annunciation is after conception, in Luke it is before conception. Such *'contradictions'* are so *'great and essential'* as to be insuperable.<sup>37</sup> Then there is the chronological difficulty created by the flight to Egypt in relation to the presentation in Luke, and the different traditions as to the permanent residence of the family of Jesus (Matthew - Bethlehem, Luke - Nazareth). Despite often lengthy attempts to answer these difficulties, some of them remain as serious problems for recent scholars. For instance, Raymond Brown still feels the two narratives are virtually irreconcilable.<sup>38</sup>

Other scholars would not agree. For many the only points which remain irreconcilable are the genealogies and the chronological-residential problem, but these are not regarded as being significant for the historical validity of the narratives. The differences in the vantage point of the two narratives, the differences in details, and the two differences just mentioned indicate rather that the two writers were ignorant of each other and were transmitting different traditions. This makes the numerous agreements between them an indication of their historicity. Orr lists some twelve points of agreement.<sup>39</sup>

Machen's attempt to harmonise the genealogies has become the standard apologetic argument used by conservative scholars. His explanation relies on the Jewish practice of Levirate marriage and the possibility of a *'divergent collateral line'* of royal descent.<sup>40</sup> Matthew's genealogy represents the legal descent to the throne of David, while Luke gives the natural descent for Joseph's particular family. The chronological-residential difficulty cannot be strictly reconciled, but conservative scholars (Gore, Orr, Machen) point out that modern historiographical exactness need not be imposed upon ancient writers. This difficulty need not impugn the basis of the narratives themselves.

Such conclusions are also shared by scholars who would not normally be considered particularly conservative. For instance, Nellessen believes that despite Luke 2.39 there are no radical contradictions between the two narratives. The agreements between them are significant.<sup>41</sup> Of the four exegetical difficulties treated by Barth, only the genealogies is mentioned from the issues raised in this section. He denies that *'the questions raised are so hard*

*to answer that one is forced by exegesis to contest the dogma'.<sup>42</sup>*

Our own conclusions on this issue will be left until the conclusion of the fourth chapter.

### **The relationship between the infancy narratives and the remainder of the N.T. - The argument from silence**

It is sometimes suggested that the idea of the virgin birth contradicts John's concept of Christ's pre-existence.<sup>43</sup> Slightly more moderate would be the view that John's Logos Christology operates as a polemic against the infancy tradition.<sup>44</sup> However, the common view would be that the infancy tradition expresses a different stage in the development of N.T. Christology.<sup>45</sup>

More frequently, the infancy narratives are questioned on the grounds of the silence of the remainder of the N.T. as to the virgin birth. This argument has been widely and exhaustively debated and needs to be dealt with in this chapter. Scholars who have given special attention to this subject are Vincent Taylor, Gresham Machen and Douglas Edwards in the earlier period and Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer and Manual Migueuens in more recent research. The more detailed treatment of the issues is to be found in the works of Taylor and Edwards, the former in support of the use of the argument and the latter in criticism of the use of the argument.

The main issues are as follows. Is the use of this kind of argument legitimate when it comes to the N.T.? Is there evidence of early knowledge of this doctrine outside the N.T.? Three passages in Paul's letters may be relevant, and one in particular, could refer to the virgin birth. However, if Paul is silent, what is the reason for this silence, and what is to be made of it? Does Mark 6.3 amount to a veiled reference to the virgin birth, or does Mk. 3.21-35 indicate Mary's ignorance of it? If Mark is silent, what is to be made of his silence? Is John 1.13 in the original singular or plural, and do references to the man from Nazareth or Galilee indicate a rejection of the virgin birth tradition. We will briefly state the opposing views.

#### **1. The use of the argument from silence.**

For Taylor the argument is legitimate at this point because the N.T. documents do speak often of the Incarnation. They are unanimously silent about this tradition. This is significant. Edwards points out that the N.T. is not a theological text book. It does not deal systematically with each doctrine. Further such a silence would need to be total, but this is

not the case. Hence it loses its force.<sup>46</sup>

## 2. Other historical sources.

This is a point made by von Campenhausen rather than Taylor. He refers to evidence of a proto-Lucan infancy source which knew nothing of the virgin birth. This together with the silence of Paul and Mark indicates that the idea was not original to the apostolic witness. Neither was it universally accepted in the sub-apostolic period. It does not appear in the letter of Barnabas or in the Shepherd of Hermas. The only ones who mentioned it were Ignatius and Justin, who both came from Palestinian-Syrian territory. The *'legend'* was therefore *'born and bred'* in this restricted area.<sup>47</sup>

Edwards emphasises the centrality of apostolic authority in the early Church. The evangelists were not free to create their own materials. They wrote under apostolic oversight. This means that the gospels depend upon earlier apostolically accepted tradition. The early Roman creed mentions the virgin birth. This reflects beliefs from the period prior to A.D. 100. Its source is therefore independent of the gospels. This is therefore an independent witness to the virgin birth. Further, Ignatius, who mentions the virgin birth, came from Antioch, the centre of the Pauline mission. Luke claims to have received his material from apostolic witnesses (Lk.1.1-4) and was a companion of Paul. It is difficult to believe that Paul could have been ignorant of this tradition.<sup>48</sup>

## 3. Paul.

Taylor examines Galatians 4.4; Rom. 5.12-17 and Phil. 2.5-11. As Edwards agrees with his conclusions except for Gal.4.4, we will only mention the latter, which remains a live issue. Normally *γεννητος* is used in the N.T. to refer to physical birth. Paul uses *γενομενον* usually meaning to *'come into being'*. Taylor argues that Paul never uses *γεννητος* anywhere and that it is only found twice elsewhere in the N.T. (Matt.11.11; Lk. 7.28). Further the papyri give evidence of *γενομενον* being used for birth. Edwards replies that the use of these words in general is relevant to their usage in Paul. Further, the papyri do not give the evidence that Taylor maintains they do. The thirty-three cases of *γενναω* found in the N.T. all refer to a child's birth, while the 666 cases of *γωμαι* all refer to *'coming into being'*.<sup>49</sup>

Taylor maintains that Paul is silent *'just when his silence is most difficult to understand if he knew the tradition'*.<sup>50</sup> Edwards replies that Paul never actually seeks to prove the Incarnation. He rather assumes it. He argues not to it, but from it. Paul's silence is therefore understandable.<sup>51</sup>

## 4. Mark.

In Mk.6.3, Jesus is referred to as '*the son of Mary*' where in the synoptic parallels he is the '*son of Joseph*' or '*the carpenter*'. Why is Joseph not mentioned in Mark and why is Mary mentioned? Taylor suggests that Joseph may have been dead, and that both Matthew and Luke in their narrative '*have destroyed the reference*'.<sup>52</sup> Edwards points out that '*son of Mary*' is most unusual in the Jewish environment of the time, that Matthew and Luke do not need to allude to the virgin birth because of their infancy narratives, and that if their silence outside the infancy narratives does not mean their ignorance, then neither should Mark's relative silence.

Taylor does not regard Mk.3.31-35 as a particularly strong case either way. He is not impressed by the argument that Mark need not have mentioned the virgin birth because he was Peter's interpreter, while Edwards feels this has real force.

## 5. John.

Taylor feels John must have been aware of the tradition. Do references such as Jn. 1.13, 45; 6.42; 7.27, 41-42, 52 amount to a veiled rejection of the tradition? He concludes that John indicates a weak, tacit acceptance of the tradition.<sup>53</sup> Edwards goes to some lengths to show that Jn.1.13 was originally singular and contends that John therefore clearly mentions the virgin birth.<sup>54</sup> He then supports this view using the first epistle of John, where a distinct parallel is drawn between Jesus as the One born of God and the believer as born of God (I Jn. 5.18).<sup>55</sup>

By way of comment, we would like to suggest that Edwards' remarks about the use of the argument from silence and the general acceptance of the tradition in the early Church carry more weight. That Gal. 4.4 can be used to support Paul's knowledge of the doctrine is less likely, simply because it introduces an issue which is not really in context with Paul's thought in Galatians. Diachronic arguments of this type are precarious. On the other hand we fail to see where in Paul's epistles he should have referred to the virgin birth had he known about it. One of Edwards' arguments, that the same criterion of silence would deny Paul knowledge of the Lord's supper, but for 1 Cor. 11, is difficult to answer. Further, it does seem difficult to believe that he would have been ignorant of a tradition that came from the area of Syrian Antioch if the traditional association of the Pauline mission with this area has any basis. In the case of Mark, the various textual arguments prove very little either way, and in the case of John, it is normally accepted that he was aware of the tradition in any case.

It is our view that the various arguments more or less cancel each other out, whether in the earlier or later discussions, and the issue may be said to have exhausted itself. We question whether it can be used to determine the historicity of the infancy narratives in any sense.

### The Interpolation Hypothesis in the case of Luke 1-2

Luke's infancy narrative has tended to receive more attention than Matthew's. This is probably due to the fact that the Lucan writings are more extensive, the infancy narrative itself is more complex and because the virginal conception is more explicitly stated in Luke. One issue peculiar to Luke is the hypothesis that the verse or verses which refer to the virginal conception are not original to Luke 1-2.<sup>56</sup> Taylor and Machen raise the issues thoroughly.

Taylor begins by making the point that scholars have often confused two different questions. First, there is the question, '*Did St. Luke believe in the virgin birth?*' and second, there is the question, '*Is the virgin birth an original part of the third gospel?*' If the former is to be answered in the affirmative and the latter in the negative, then either the verses on the virgin birth were added to the third gospel by Luke himself, or by some later scribe. Taylor discusses the second question. He does this in three parts. Firstly, he investigates the verses in Luke 1-2 which are '*said to be irreconcilable with the view that St. Luke wrote in the belief that Jesus was miraculously conceived of the virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost*'.<sup>57</sup> Secondly, he discusses the passage in question, namely Luke 1.34-35 and its relationship with its context. Thirdly, he investigates whether Luke himself wrote Luke 1.34-35.

#### 1. Verses in Luke 1-2 irreconcilable with Luke 1.34-35.

There are the following cases.

3.23 and the phrase, '*as was supposed*'.

2.22 which refers to '*their purification*'.

2.33; 2.50 which express the surprise of Joseph and Mary at the presentation.

References to Joseph and Mary in 2.27, 41, 48, and 2.5 which mentions Joseph '*with Mary his betrothed*'.

Taylor is careful in his exegesis and concludes that most of these cases are better understood



as not indicating a knowledge of the virgin birth.<sup>58</sup>

## 2. Luke 1.34-35 and its context.

Firstly, Taylor rejects any attempts to read this passage as anything other than an explicit reference to the virgin birth. However, he also rejects attempts to see Lk. 1.30-33 as including a reference to the virgin birth.<sup>59</sup> This leads to his concept of the '*radical difference*' between the two passages. Reasons for regarding Lk.1.34-35 as a later insertion are as follows.

Verse 36 follows naturally from verse 33.<sup>60</sup>

Verse 34 follows unnaturally from verse 33.<sup>61</sup>

Verse 35 is followed unnaturally by verses 36-37.<sup>62</sup>

The similarity between Mary's question and Zechariah's, and the difference with which they are treated by the angel.

The different senses of divine sonship in verses 32 and 35.<sup>63</sup>

Luke gives us no reason to believe that Mary was of Davidic descent. His concept of descent is not purely legal, as in Matthew. How then was the virgin birth part of Luke's account?

The cumulative effect of these arguments lead to the conclusion that Luke 1.34-35 is a later insertion.<sup>64</sup>

## 3. Did Luke write Lk. 1. 34-35?

The textual evidence is overwhelmingly against this hypothesis. However, 1. 34-35 may have been added before the gospel began to circulate.<sup>65</sup> He then investigates the language used in this passage and concludes that '*on linguistic grounds the most reasonable conclusion we can frame is that Luke 1.34f comes from the hand of St. Luke himself*'.<sup>66</sup> He investigates the possibility that the phrase *ἐπει ἀνδρα ου γινωσκω* is a later insertion and concludes that this is to be rejected. An interpolator would be unlikely to exercise such restraint.

The seemingly contradictory nature of the conclusions he has reached (2 and 3 above) can be solved, for Taylor, by the hypothesis that Luke received the virgin birth tradition some time

after he had written the gospel and rather hastily inserted the section before he could smooth out the inconsistencies caused by this insertion.

Machen's treatment deals with far more than the hypothesis proposed by Taylor. For our purposes, we will simply mention his replies that are relevant to Taylor's arguments as an indication of the type of issues involved. Firstly, he replies to the supposed conflict between Luke 1-2 and Lk. 1.34-34. His conclusions, with an equally careful exegesis, differ from those of Taylor.<sup>67</sup> In reply to the view that 1.34-35 fits unnaturally with 1.36f because the promise of a greater miracle is given as confirmation of a lesser miracle, he argues that exactly the reverse should apply. The greater miracle can only be confirmed by a lesser one. Why would a miraculous confirmation be given if all Mary had heard was that she would be the mother of the Messiah by natural birth?

In reply to the different treatment of Mary and Zechariah Machen gives reasons to suggest that their questions, when carefully examined, are not the same.

The point at which Machen's reply to Taylor, and others, is at its strongest is where he argues from the parallel structure of the two annunciations. The parallel structure is not possible to view as co-incidental. Did the interpolator manage to insert a passage which fitted into the context so well as to create this remarkable parallelism? This, for Machen, is too much to believe. Mary's question, and the section under discussion, become an argument in favour of the integrity of the first chapter of Luke.<sup>68</sup>

By way of comment we wish to suggest that the verses in Luke 1-2 which are said to conflict with Luke 1.34-35 can be argued either way. The arguments tend to cancel each other out. Machen's reply to the greater and lesser miracle does not carry more weight for us than Taylor's argument. However, his argument from the structure of the two annunciations is fatal to the interpolation hypothesis, and the complicated nature of Taylor's hypothesis, with its use of an insertion by Luke himself before the circulation of the gospel does not give a firm basis to the hypothesis in the first place.

### The Linguistic Origins of Luke's Infancy Narrative

This is probably the most carefully researched technical issue to be found in the history of the investigation of the infancy narratives.<sup>69</sup> There are basically four possible views as to the linguistic composition of Luke 1-2.

1. Luke's narrative is a '*pastiche*' derived from the Septuagint.

2. Luke has used a Greek source.
3. Luke had used an Aramaic source.
4. Luke has used a Hebrew source.<sup>70</sup>

The subject has been raised both in the earlier period of research and more recently. In the earlier period the works of Charles Torrey and Adolf Harnack ably represent the various options. In more recent research the Semitic source view has been rigorously defended by Paul Winter and supported by René Laurentin. The opposite view has been argued by Nigel Turner and Pierre Benoit. Both R.McL. Wilson and Heinz Schürmann have attempted to bring the various views into synthesis. All the articles from the later period come from the 1950's. This was also the period which saw an interest in the possibility of a Baptist source in Luke 1-2. The two issues are obviously interrelated. It is of interest to note that two French Catholic scholars, namely Benoit and Laurentin were found to be on opposing sides of the debate. This indicates that the purely linguistic issue tended to go on without reference to a particular theological or historical perspective.

Harnack actually deals with the entire Lucan corpus with the aim of demonstrating a common author for Luke-Acts as a whole. Having shown this in the remainder of the Lucan writings on the basis of a common vocabulary and style of Greek, Harnack makes a detailed examination of Lk. 1.5-15, 39-56, 68-79 and 2.15-20, 41-52, comparing the vocabulary and style of the sections with the Lucan style he has discovered in the remainder of Luke-Acts. If a word appears frequently in the Lucan writings and less frequently in the remainder of the N.T., he regards it as Lucan.<sup>71</sup>

In a slightly later work Harnack examines the Lucan psalms in particular. Here he arranges the psalms side by side with numerous passages from the Septuagint and deduces that a strong dependence upon the Greek of the Septuagint is clearly evident. His conclusion as to the infancy narrative in general is as follows.

1. The hypothesis of a Greek source underlying Luke's redaction is impossible.
2. Consequently, Luke must have,
  - (a) either translated an Aramaic source, or,
  - (b) written the narrative himself with the use of oral tradition.
3. Of these, the latter is the most probable. This is the case because at least in the Magnificat and the Benedictus all possibility of a non-Lucan source disappears.

As with Harnack, Torrey's work on the Lucan infancy narrative is part of a wider project to show that the gospels were originally translated from Aramiac. His criterion in his research *'is the continual presence, in the texts of considerable extent, of a Semitic idiom underlying the Greek'*.<sup>73</sup> Many sections of Luke 1-2 are found to be poetic if translated back into Hebrew. He mentions 1.13-17, 30-33 and 2.34f and then gives examples in the case of 2.14 and 1.74. In the case of the Lucan psalms, he comments that, *'not even a very ingenious deceiver could have concocted them unless in this one way : by writing them - in a Semitic tongue and then rendering them into Greek'*.<sup>74</sup> In the prose sections he deals with 1.5-10, 39, 51, 65, 74, 78; 2.1, 11, 35.<sup>75</sup> He points out that there are examples of Semitic material such as the Wisdom of Solomon and the history of Josephus which are contemporary with Luke and written in excellent Greek. On the other hand the Septuagint, because it is a translation, bears all the marks of translation Greek. Luke would certainly have known the difference between the two and would not be likely to deliberately imitate poor Greek.

He accepts the work of Plummer, who like Harnack established the fact that Luke must have written these chapters himself. He therefore concludes that *'the author of the third gospel himself translated the Narrative of the Infancy from Hebrew into Greek'*.<sup>76</sup>

With the two positions outlined above, one is faced with an obvious thesis and antithesis. As one moves to the more recent writers one observes the beginning of a synthesis.

Winter takes as his starting point the suggestion made by Harnack and others that Luke deliberately imitated the style of the Septuagint to evoke the right atmosphere. This, he feels, suffers from its artificiality. Luke was capable of writing good Greek. Why should he deliberately retain phrases, *'which to a Greek ear sound monstrous and barbarous?'*<sup>77</sup> In his research Winter examines the use of *ο κυριος* in Luke 1-2, the linguistic structure of 1.7,13,17,26, 35,37,51; 2.4-18; 2.4,8,13,34; Hebraic expressions in 1.6,33,39,59,68f; 2.11,29,52 and provides a Hebrew translation of the Lucan psalms.<sup>78</sup>

In support of the Hebrew source hypothesis, Laurentin has examined the use of etymological allusions to the meaning of the names of the principal figures in the Lucan text. Numerous such cases of a play on the name of an individual can be found in the Old Testament. The allusions go beyond the particular verse that narrates the naming of the individual and are often repeated at intervals in the subsequent narrative.<sup>79</sup> His research leads him to conclude that the same phenomenon can be found in Luke 1-2 in the cases of *'John'*, *'Jesus'*, *'Gabriel'*, *'Zechariah'*, *'Elizabeth'*, and *'Mary'*.<sup>80</sup> This is obviously only possible if Luke 1-2 was originally in Hebrew. He also discovers that at the beginning of each psalm the names of the main figures are alluded to (1.54-55, 72-73).<sup>81</sup> The main figures who appear in the narrative there-

fore have their names embedded in the songs. This means that the songs cannot be separated from the narrative and consequently theories which assume an independent existence for the psalms prior to their insertion into the narrative need to be revised. The same applies to the rearrangement of the placing of the psalms or their ascription to another figure (the Magnificat to Elizabeth).<sup>82</sup>

In reply to Winter, Turner points out that, '*The article does not allow the possibility that the use of Hebrew sources went hand in hand with consultation of the LXX*', as suggested for instance by Matthew Black.<sup>83</sup> It depends upon the assumption that Luke's language here is peculiar and different from the remainder of Luke-Acts. Turner examines the syntax of Luke 1-2 and compares it with the remainder of Luke-Acts. In every case he is able to demonstrate that these characteristics, while being more frequent in Luke 1-2, are nevertheless almost as frequent in the remainder of Luke-Acts, and concludes that '*it is possible to identify many of those Semitic features which characterise his style elsewhere when he is probably not translating Semitic sources*'.<sup>84</sup> Further, it can be shown that there are many Septuagintal phrases to be found in Luke 1-2. '*Here are traces of a mind which revelled in the cadence of the Greek Old Testament*'.<sup>85</sup> This means that Luke did often write in Hebraised Greek and did not consider it to be '*barbarous*'.

Benoit takes Turner's conclusions a step further. He examines a number of cases (1.5,6,12; 18,57,64) where he believes Luke has departed further from the Hebrew than the Septuagint, i.e. his linguistic form is more clearly Greek than Hebraic. He concludes that the cases against a Hebrew source are more numerous than those in favour of a Hebrew source.<sup>86</sup> In the case of the Benedictus, Benoit is more inclined to accept the possibility of a Hebrew substratum.<sup>87</sup>

In the articles of Turner and Benoit, Winter's linguistic arguments in the cases of Luke 1.7,17, 37 and 51 are questioned.<sup>88</sup> In Winter's reply to Turner, each of these cases are defended.<sup>89</sup> Winter then seeks to find the areas of agreement between himself and Turner and to clarify the areas of disagreement.

The area of agreement is as follows. For Turner, '*the ultimate source of much material in Luke 1-2 was Hebrew or Aramaic*'.<sup>89</sup> For Winter, '*the Greek record of Luke 1-2 is ultimately derived from a Hebrew literary source*'.<sup>90</sup> Winter has never suggested that the immediate source of Luke 1-2 was a Hebrew document. The ultimate Hebrew document was '*transmitted through a Jewish channel*' and '*modifications*' were made by '*successive*' writers.<sup>91</sup> The final product has clear marks of Lucan style throughout, and he has never denied that Luke was familiar with the Septuagint and even influenced by its style.

The areas of disagreement can be summarised under four points.

1. The real issue is whether Luke composed the infancy narratives himself in the sense that he made use of no written sources, or whether he merely superimposed the '*common varnish*' of his own style throughout. In his use of Mark for instance, Luke has made many changes of language and style, but he has nevertheless still followed his source quite closely.
2. In terms of method, how are we to discover Luke's source, surely not by drawing attention to the similarities of style, but to the differences in style and diction between the various parts of Luke-Acts? No one would deny the common Lucan authorship of the whole of Luke-Acts. The vast amount of statistical material adduced by Turner and others for Luke 1-2 is relatively unimportant.
3. The non-Septuagintal Hebraisms in the remainder of Luke-Acts can be viewed in one of two ways. Either Luke may have taken over expressions which he found in his sources for Luke 1-2, or Hebrew sources may lie behind some parts of Luke-Acts outside Luke 1-2. It has never been proved that Luke did not use Semitic sources elsewhere and so this cannot be assumed.
4. In the study by Martin Johannesson on the use of *καὶ ἐγένετο* and *ἐγένετο δὲ* in the Lucan writings, it has been shown that Luke was more Greek than Semitic in his tendencies and usually did away with Hebraisms rather than keep them. '*This observation is fatal to the theory that the writer of Luke-Acts deliberately imitated the Hebraisms of the LXX*'.<sup>93</sup>

In his attempt to make some sort of synthesis out of these various views, Wilson maintains that in some of the detailed linguistic arguments (e.g. Luke 1.7,17,37,51) Winter's views tend to carry more weight. Of the four options mentioned at the beginning of this section he notes that the Aramaic source idea is now more or less outmoded because it was based on the assumption that written Hebrew was unknown during the first century. The idea of a Greek source is now normally absorbed into the concept of Septuagintal Greek. Only the first and the fourth possibilities therefore remain ('*pastiche*' derived from the Septuagint of a Hebrew source). These views may not in fact be irreconcilable. '*Ultimately*', most seem to agree, the tradition comes from a Hebrew source, either written or oral. Most also agree that Luke '*revelled in the cadences of the Greek Old Testament*'. The Lucan psalms are most probably based on Hebrew originals. Laurentin's hypothesis may have truth in it, and '*the possibility of written sources, ultimately in Hebrew, must be given due consideration*'. 'To

*go further than this general estimate of probabilities would appear to be a venture into the precarious field of conjecture'.<sup>94</sup>*

Schürmann comes to similar conclusions to those of Winter. He believes the elements in Luke 1-2 can be best explained by the existence of a Hellenistic Jewish Christian translator whose theology was more primitive than Luke. While there are many Lucanisms throughout, Luke does not write in 'biblical' Septuagintal language to this extent elsewhere. The Hellenistic Christian editor probably received the Baptist and Jesus narratives already combined in a Semitic version. Faulty translations, style, etymological hints, metre and rhythm and poetic prose indicate the Semitic original. Though all these hints may be challenged, the overall character of the narrative cannot be explained as a biblical imitation.<sup>95</sup> The extent to which evidence of a Semitic source is used in this thesis will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

#### Baptist and other sources behind the Lucan Infancy Narrative

In the fourth chapter we will examine each pericope in the infancy narratives. This section is included here mainly to cover the question of the so-called Baptist source document found in Luke 1 which was given particular attention in the 1950's. While the hypothesis can be found at a much earlier date with scholars such as Bultmann and Dibelius, the articles by Vielhauer, Winter and Benoit raise most of the current issues. We will indicate the basic ideas, as set forth by Bultmann and Dibelius, and then deal with the articles from the 1950's.

Bultmann proposed that Luke 1 and Luke 2 should be seen as coming from two different sources. Luke 1.30-33 is contradicted by the angelic message in Luke 2.11-14.<sup>96</sup> Dibelius explains that in the former Jesus is the eternal Davidic ruler, in the latter he is the Saviour who brings joy to all. In Luke 2.4-5 Joseph and Mary are formally introduced as though they had not been introduced already. They are described as the parents of Jesus. This contradicts the story of the virgin birth.

Then in Luke 1, the Christian parts of the narrative need to be separated from those that originated from the Baptist tradition. In the Christian view of the Baptist, John is merely the forerunner of Jesus, while in Luke 1.5-25, 57-66a he is the forerunner, not of the Messiah, but of the Lord himself. He is placed on the same level as Jesus. Jesus is *μεγας* (1.32), John is *ισμεγας ενωπιον κυριου* (1.15). The former has Hellenistic connotations, the latter phrase is purely Semitic. The naming of the child and the wonder of the people during the ceremony is also truly Semitic. These elements come from a Jewish, rather than a Christian source. Luke 1.5-25 and 57-66a therefore represent a Baptist source.

In the remaining Christian narrative Dibelius isolates 1.24-25 and 1.36-37 as redactional. The hands of the redactor can also be seen with the insertion of Joseph into the narrative in 1.26-27. Luke 1.39-56 is clearly redactional because it operates as a literary device to demonstrate the superiority of Jesus to John. Luke 1.26-34, 38 came from a Hellenistic background after it had been transformed by the Jewish-Palestinian environment, and arose as a theologoumenon. The Lucan psalms were noted by Bultmann as Jewish eschatological hymns.<sup>97</sup>

Vielhauer seeks to develop the idea of the Benedictus as part of the Baptist source as well. Gunkel suggested that the Benedictus had two separate parts recognisable by the change in tense (Lk. 1.68-75; 1.76-79), the former being Jewish, the latter Christian. Vielhauer proposes that the whole psalm should be regarded as Baptist. There is no real break in the psalm between the first and the second parts, and the view of John the Baptist found in Luke 1.5-23, 57-66a is also to be found in the Benedictus. In Luke 1.5-23, 52-66a, John is portrayed as an eschatological saving figure. In the Benedictus (1.68-75) the coming salvation is also thought of in terms of the Jewish eschatological hope. In both, John is regarded as the prophet to precede the coming of the most high. In both, John is not subordinated to Jesus. Clear parallels appear from a close comparison between Luke 1.14-17 and Luke 1.76-79. The concept of the Baptist found in both these sections as one bringing salvation, contrasts with the Christian (Synoptic) view of John as a prophet with a ministry of judgment. The existence of a Baptist sect which had this different view of John is confirmed by evidence from the second century.<sup>98</sup>

Winter distinguishes three sources in Luke 1-2 in the prose narrative. Luke 2.22-39 (the Presentation) and Luke 2.41-51 (the Disputation) come from the area around the temple in Jerusalem and probably originated from the family of Jesus. Luke 2.40 and 2.52 are obviously redactional.<sup>99</sup> Luke 2.41-51 does not indicate later Christological speculation because the way in which Jesus speaks about God as his father has similarities with phrases found in Targum Yerushalmi on Exodus 15.2. This comes from a first century Jewish environment.<sup>100</sup>

Luke 1.5-80 comes from a Baptist source which contained the appearance to Zechariah (1.5-23) and the appearance of the same angel to Elizabeth (1.25-38). The Baptist source is based upon the story of Samson's birth found in Pseudo-Philo.<sup>101</sup>

The Nazarene editor (i.e. a Palestinian follower of Jesus) combined these two sources (Temple and Baptist) and composed Luke 2.4-21 himself. Winter does not agree that the Benedictus reflects Baptist thinking. Both the Magnificat and the Benedictus were Maccabean battle hymns which were inserted into the narrative by the Nazarene editor.<sup>102</sup> In general the



atmosphere found in Luke 1-2 indicates a Jewish environment prior to the armed conflict with Rome which was influenced by midrashim on the Old Testament.<sup>103</sup>

Benoit critically examines the whole concept of a Baptist source in Luke 1-2. As we have mentioned already, he questions the idea of a Semitic linguistic substratum. His main contention is that the so-called Baptist elements can be shown to be either Septuagintal, Jewish Rabbinical, Lucan, or Synoptic.

There are three principal motifs in Luke 1, the announcement of the pre-ordained child, the mission of the angel and the temple ritual. All of these in most of the elements mentioned can be traced to the Septuagint or Rabbinic literature. The way in which the Old Testament and Jewish materials are used and selected however indicates that one must assume an oral historical tradition.<sup>104</sup>

The portrait of John the Baptist in Luke 1.15-17 is either Christian or Lucan. The Nazarite element fits the Synoptic tradition of John as one who came *'neither eating nor drinking'*. The fulness of the Spirit is a theme found in the Old Testament and particularly in Luke-Acts. The bringing back of the hearts of the people is typical of Old Testament prophets. The argument about John as *μεγας* has been overdone. It is a typically Lucan term. The distinction between John preceding the Messiah and preceding the Lord would not stand in the context of Old Testament theology.

In the Benedictus, Benoit sees only Luke 1.76-77 as being redactional. The prophetic aorist of 1.68-75 in no way undermines the sense of Messianic fulfilment in the psalm. The use of *ηγειρεν* is unusual, and from a comparison with Luke 7.14, Acts 3.15 and 4.10, Benoit deduces that it reflects the kerygma terminology of the early Christian community. The same may be said for the use of *Δαυιδ παιδος* (1.69, Acts 4.25), and *σωτηρ* (1.77). The use of *προφητος υψωτου* taken over from 1.15, when compared with *υιος υψωτου* in 1.32, emphasises the greatness of Jesus rather than the greatness of John. Luke 1.77a should be dissociated in thought from 1.77b. John would bring the knowledge of salvation, while the *'forgiveness of sins'* should be compared to similar language in the Synoptics and Acts.<sup>105</sup>

Enough has been said to show that the hypothesis of a separate Baptist tradition, reflecting different views about the Baptist, can be argued both ways. More recent scholarship has tended to follow Benoit, rather than Vielhauer and others on this issue. Thus for instance Schürmann does not accept the theory of a Baptist origin for the Benedictus or the *'Baptist'* sections of Luke 1. Against this hypothesis he mentions the interest of the Jewish Christian community in John, the similar respect for the Law and traditional piety in both *'Baptist'*

and Christian sections, and the fact that the disciples of John who joined Jesus must have brought numerous stories with them. He regards the probable source of the Baptist sections as the Jewish Christian community in Palestine some time before the unrest of the sixties.<sup>106</sup>

### Critical questions in Matthew's Infancy Narrative

Travelling stars, wicked kings and wise men are not normally regarded as the stuff of real history. Matthew seems to indicate a tendency to exaggerate elsewhere in his gospel. He introduces an ass beside the colt in 21.2, he mentions exactly thirty pieces of silver in 26.15 and he has the mingling of gall with wine in 27.34.<sup>107</sup> Not surprisingly, therefore, Strauss mentions the numerous ancient myths about the danger in which great men were born (Cyrus, Romulus, Augustus, Moses) and Bultmann mentions, in connection with the wise men, the Arabian cult of Dusares which had its shrines in Petra, Hebron and possibly Bethlehem. Their feast of the birth of their god from its virgin mother included the offering of gifts such as money, ointments and incense.<sup>108</sup> One can therefore understand why the historicity of Matthew's infancy narrative has been seriously questioned.

However, other scholars found reasons to question this simple result on the basis of a careful examination of Matthew's literary methods. In each case in the gospel where Matthew has '*exaggerated*', his additions have been to existing traditions (found in the Synoptics), and in each case this has been due to certain Old Testament texts which in themselves could never have created the N.T. accounts. They are not a free creation of the event itself by Matthew. *'The argument is weakened in proportion as the prophecy is not such as would have suggested itself prior to the event'*.<sup>109</sup>

The whole structure of the infancy narrative is around such Old Testament quotations, and, as many scholars have pointed out, none of the Old Testament texts found in the infancy narrative could possibly have suggested the stories found in Matthew.<sup>110</sup> This consideration therefore makes it possible for Neander to suggest that one should distinguish between the facts and Matthew's imaginative description of the facts - as for instance with the star, which may have been some unusual constellation, but would not have travelled from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.<sup>111</sup>

The particularly Jewish character of Matthew's quotations led to the suggestion that Matthew's infancy narrative was a classic case of midrashic exegesis. But again, no agreement was reached as to exactly how Matthew had used this exegetical method. For Bultmann Matthew's technique should be compared to the midrash peshar used at Qumran, where the Old Testament

text was the starting point from which the midrash was actualised.<sup>112</sup> An example of how this could have occurred was suggested for instance by C.H.Cave. Taking his starting point from the suggestion that the gospel of Matthew is related to the Passover Haggadah and the regular Sabbath reading in the old Synagogue, Cave draws parallels between the incidents in Matthew's narrative and the combination of Old Testament readings for successive Sabbath days. He indicates how Matthew's stories could have originated.<sup>113</sup>

On the other hand, G.H. Box, who was one of the first to make a thorough examination of the midrashic nature of Matthew's infancy narrative came to the opposite conclusion. For instance, with the use of Hosea 11.1, Matthew's usage shows that he regarded *'the prophetic words as charged with a wealth of hitherto unexpected meaning, which in the light of Jesus life-history, have acquired a new and widely extended significance'*.<sup>114</sup> If the story of the Magi had been actualised from the Old Testament, one would expect to find Matthew using Numbers 24.17, but this is not the case. Nellessen notes that Matthew's midrashic exegesis of the Old Testament texts has a geographical interest in every case. This suggests that the starting point of the midrash is the N.T. tradition.<sup>115</sup>

Once the idea of midrash had been raised with Matthew's infancy narrative it was soon applied to Luke's narrative as well. The question which had been raised about Matthew's imaginative midrashic exegesis was therefore raised with regard to Luke as well. Perhaps Luke had also actualised and typologised Old Testament texts? The lengths to which this possibility may be explored are evident in the work of M.D. Goulder and M.L. Sanderson. Their intention is to show that Luke 1-2 is a *'poius meditation'* by Luke in which the evangelist has *'superimposed upon such historical knowledge as he thought he possessed a pattern from the book of Genesis embroidered upon from the prophets, after the Rabbinic manner'*.<sup>116</sup> Very little historical tradition remains after the thorough treatment of Luke 1-2 which they offer. They conclude that since *'a high proportion of the events of Luke 1-2 is of a theological origin, it is useless to claim eye-witness authority for the rest'*.<sup>117</sup>

In assessing the work of these scholars, Wilson feels that here *'typology has run riot'*. The authors do not consider *'whether it is likely that Luke, the Gentile, would have composed a Haggadah in the Rabbinic manner'*.<sup>118</sup> Again enough has been said to indicate how the question of midrash can be argued either way, either for or against an historical tradition. A critical methodological issue raised in the case of Matthew 1-2 became a major issue for both infancy narratives. As one follows the development from earlier to later writers it becomes evident that the issue of myth, more frequently raised by earlier scholars, has tended to be replaced by the issue of midrash by later scholars. This has occurred gradually as more information has been forthcoming about the Jewish background to the N.T.

Midrash is one of the major issues in a critical exegesis of the infancy narratives today and space will be given to this issue in the examination of each pericope in chapter four. The question of myth must however be given attention at this point.

### From Myth to Midrash

The relationship between myth and the infancy tradition needs to be clarified in two areas. Firstly, the word '*myth*' is used in a number of different ways. Strauss tended to use the word to mean both '*legends*' from other ancient literature and '*myth*' in the sense that the world-view of the biblical writers is an expression of a pre-scientific '*miraculous*' age. A distinction need to be made between these two concepts. That the biblical writers thought in pre-scientific ways need not mean that pagan mythology directly influenced the material of the infancy narratives. Midrashic categories of thought might be termed '*mythical*' in the modern sense often attached to the word but again, this would not imply that pagan literary or folk-loric sources had directly influenced the infancy narratives. Secondly therefore, a distinction needs to be made between the direct and indirect influence of pagan mythology. Most scholars today would deny any direct influence upon the infancy narratives from this source. By indirect influence one refers to the fact that the Jewish environment in which the infancy narratives had been written (Rabbinic, midrashic, early Christian, Palestinian) had already absorbed and processed mythological ideas for some time. In this indirect sense the question of myth therefore tends to become the question of midrash. This is still very much a live question.

At this point we wish to single out the work of Thomas Boslooper because our later discussion will tend to assume the conclusions which he has reached. It would be difficult to find a more thorough or comprehensive treatment of this subject, and later scholars tend in general to work from the basis of Boslooper's conclusions.

Boslooper covers the pseudepigraphical and apocryphal traditions and comparative analogical sources.<sup>119</sup>

### Pseudepigraphical and apocryphal tradition.

There are three pieces of pseudepigraphal literature which include material from the first and second centuries, the Greek Sibylline Oracles, the Ascension of Isaiah and the Odes of Solomon. These are mostly poetic pieces which concentrate on the greatness of the child who brings in the new age. The noticeable embellishments which are made to the canonical

accounts are twofold. Firstly, in the Ascension of Isaiah, Mary suddenly discovers a child in the room. He seems to have appeared from nowhere, without the process of natural birth. Secondly, in the Odes of Solomon, Mary gives birth to the child without any pain. Boslooper mentions some fourteen apocryphal accounts of the birth stories from the first to the fifteenth century. A few do go back to the first or second centuries. Here again the tendency is to avoid the reality and pain of a natural birth. The tendency is towards a Docetic view of Christ's birth or a supernatural view of Mary's birth. In the acts of Peter no midwife is needed. In the book of James one finds the greatest exaggeration and embellishment of the canonical accounts. The book of James was the starting point for a tradition which grew in fantasy through the remaining centuries.

Boslooper points out that with the pseudepigraphical accounts there is a real link with pagan mythology,

*'Out of the competition between the cult of Mary with the cult of Isis and other non-Christian cults, the growing legend of Mary's virginity evolved a Marian theology which centred on her Docetic and super-human qualities.'*<sup>120</sup>

#### Comparative Analogical Analysis

Boslooper begins by rejecting the belief that the idea of the virgin birth entered Christianity through Gentile-Christian channels. This theory is most misleading. He examines the theory in four sections,

- a) Buddhistic tradition.
- b) Krishna tradition; Assyro-Babylonian, Zoroastrian and Mithraic affinities.
- c) Egyptian tradition.
- d) Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic affinities.

Before he begins, he makes a number of statements in criticism of those who have oversimplified comparisons.

- 1. Contemporary writers invariably use secondary sources and hardly ever examine primary sources.
- 2. They habitually quote a brief word, phrase or sentence which is lifted out of context or incorrectly translated.

3. *'Sweeping generalisations based on questionable evidence have become dogmatic conclusions.'*<sup>121</sup>
4. Insufficient attention is given to the precise meaning of words such as *'parallel'*, *'source'*, or *'analogy'*.

His research is detailed, thorough and comprehensive. He finds no definite parallels between comparative religious sources and the N.T. documents.<sup>122</sup>

In his conclusion to the subject as a whole, Boslooper follows Martin Dibelius, who similarly saw no cases of borrowing from pagan sources in the infancy narratives. However, he did see what he called a *'law of biographical analogy'*. Broadly speaking there are vague similarities between the biblical narrative and pagan ideas. Motif's such as the mother and child, supernatural conception, the attendant disturbances in nature, the threat of adversity, and the visit to the temple can be found in both types of literature. If no borrowing took place how are these similarities to be explained? Boslooper finds the answer in the *'law of development out of racial psychological consciousness'* advocated by Georges Bergeur, in the *'concept of mythical archetypes'* advocated by the psychologist Carl Jung, and in the common *'imaginative faculty of humanity'* discovered by Otto Rank.<sup>123</sup>

He goes on to state what he believes the vital differences are between the two traditions.

*'The Christian story of the virgin birth is as different from pagan "analogies" as monotheism is from polytheism, as different as Biblical ideas of the relationship between God and man are from the mythological activities of gods in human affairs, and as different as the polygamous and incestuous pagan society was from the Christian teaching on morals and marriage.'*<sup>124</sup>

### The Origin of the Infancy Traditions

The historian has not finished his task if he merely rejects the historicity of these narratives. If they are not historical then some other explanation must be found to account for their origin.<sup>125</sup> In the history of the investigation of these narratives, one observes some seven different sources that have been suggested.

1. Pagan mythology and birth legends.
2. The influence of the Old Testament.
3. Jewish midrashim and folk-lore.

4. The early Christian community, Jewish, Hellenistic, or both.
5. The development of N.T. Christology.
6. The theologies of Matthew and Luke.
7. Historical tradition stemming from the disciples or the family of Jesus.

### 1. Pagan Mythology

This has already been discussed. Here we should just note that numerous scholars (Neander, Briggs, Orr, Machen, Barth) have mentioned the difficulty of how such ideas could have been absorbed into a Jewish environment. The Ebionite rejection of the virgin birth is often quoted as an example of how resistant the Jewish environment was to such ideas. For other scholars this problem is not regarded as being so severe.

### 2. The Old Testament

Von Campenhausen is prepared to go so far as to suggest that the idea of a virgin birth could be accounted for solely on the basis of Old Testament birth stories and passages such as Isaiah 7.14 in the Septuagint, together with the story of John's birth. While he admits that *'to Jewish thinking that is certainly a completely foreign and surprising idea'*, he nevertheless suggests that *'The direct begetting by the Spirit from a virgin may appear from this angle as the fit and proper climax of the older theme, and one proportionate to the immeasurable significance of Jesus'*.<sup>126</sup> Such a use of the Old Testament would depend of course upon the midrashic development of such a theme. This leads to the next point.

### 3. Jewish Midrashim and Folk-lore

The influence of Jewish Rabbinic exegesis was discussed well before the nature of the midrashic method was fully understood. Philo's typological expositions of Old Testament birth stories have often been regarded as a possible source for the origin of the virgin birth. The problems attached to the use of the Jewish source concept, particularly for the virgin birth, were well summarised by Machen.

1. The step from the stories of supernatural births in the Old Testament (Isaac, Samson) to the virgin birth is extremely difficult to accept because of Jewish attitudes towards the begetting of children.<sup>127</sup>
2. This step is even more difficult to accept in the light of the Jewish attitude towards the transcendence of God.<sup>128</sup>

3. The Hebrew word for '*Spirit*' is feminine. *'Would the Semitic noun naturally be used to designate the divine power that took the place of the male factor in the birth of Jesus?'*<sup>129</sup>
4. The Jews expected a Messiah from the lineage of David. How then could Jewish Christians have developed the idea of a Messiah who was not the son of Joseph but of Mary?<sup>130</sup>
5. There is no evidence of Isaiah 7.14 ever being used in the manner suggested in pre-Christian Judaism.<sup>131</sup> The idea could only have developed in a Greek speaking environment. But this conflicts with the Palestinian Jewish character of the infancy narratives.
6. Philo can only be suggested as a possible source if one fails to understand his allegorical exegetical method.<sup>132</sup>

Some of these points are still relevant in the modern discussion about midrash.

#### 4. The Early Christian Community

Was the environment in which the infancy narratives were written, Jewish Christian Palestinian or Hellenistic Christian, or both? A common view is that the idea of the virgin birth entered in when the traditions were passed on from the Jewish to the Hellenistic Christian environment. This hypothesis is the basis of Taylor's attempt to show that the virgin birth was a later interpolation into the Lucan narrative, and of A.R.C. Leaney's thesis of an earlier and a later tradition being evident in both infancy narratives. In the earlier tradition, *'Joseph and Mary were betrothed but not married when Jesus was conceived'*. In the later tradition, *'Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit upon her without human agency.'*<sup>133</sup>

The critical questions which arise in this area are, first, if the interpolation hypothesis is unsound and if the virginal conception tradition cannot be unravelled from the remainder of the infancy narratives, and if both infancy narratives are from the early Palestinian Christian environment, how did the '*Hellenistic*' infancy tradition enter in at all?

Second, and arising out of the first, how early or late are the infancy narratives? Harnack believed Matthew's narrative '*breathes of Palestine*', and that its characteristics would have been absent had the narrative grown out of Gentile-Christian soil between A.D. 50 and A.D.



80.<sup>134</sup> Luke would only have included his narrative in the belief that it came to him from the family of Jesus. Hence, it must, for Harnack, have come to him *'from Palestine'*.<sup>135</sup> From an investigation of the cultural background of Luke 1-2, Winter concludes that it came from *'Jews who were living in Palestine in a Jewish Christian community well before the start of the armed conflict with Rome'*.<sup>136</sup> The relationship between dating and the various source theories will need to be explored.

Third, is it really possible to distinguish clearly between the Jewish and Hellenistic Christian environments? Much of the discussion seems to be based upon this distinction. However, Schürmann concludes that Luke's infancy narrative arose amongst Hellenistic Jewish Christians in Judea in the sixties.<sup>137</sup> Similarly Robert H. Gundry argues for a multi-lingual background for the gospel of Matthew.<sup>138</sup>

## 5. Christological Developments

The idea that the post-Easter revelation about the person of Jesus was pushed back in stages to his baptism, then his birth and finally his pre-existence has been discussed in connection with the birth narratives for some time. Lobstein suggested a similar idea. He understood the infancy narratives as *'explanatory formula'* used to *'solve the Christological problem'*. First there was the primitive or theocratic Messiahship, where Jesus was understood as the King of Israel. Second there was the metaphysical concept of Messiahship, where Jesus was understood to have pre-existed his Incarnation, as for instance in the Johannine concept of the Logos. This Christology developed in the second generation amongst the more intellectual members of the early Church. Thirdly the development from theocratic to metaphysical Messiahship amongst the educated was matched by a simpler development from the theocratic to the physiological concept of Messiahship amongst the less educated, who were more influenced by Old Testament stories of supernatural births and Jewish legends.<sup>139</sup> Brown poses the problem in another way. The infancy narratives seem to have a *'high'* Christology. The general consensus is that this *'high'* Christology only developed in later Church tradition. This implies that the infancy narratives are not historical.<sup>140</sup> The theologumenal concept of the origin of the infancy narratives depends upon these ideas of Christological development. The critical problem in this area is the relationship between dating and the various Christological developments. Where does the physiological Messiahship concept come in relation to Pauline, Synoptic or Johannine theology?<sup>141</sup> Is a more developed Christology an evidence of dating, or geography, or the sociological-theological environment? Could different Christologies have developed simultaneously in different settings? Is the Christology of the infancy narratives *'high'*? Is the Christology of the N.T. documents in general

any lower?

## 6. The Theologies of Matthew and Luke

We have already noted comments about Matthew's folk-loric tendencies. Brown draws attention to this.<sup>142</sup> In the case of Luke the question of his historical method and reliability has been a major subject of discussion all along. How does one assess this area in relation to the midrashic tendencies which various scholars have discovered in his infancy narrative? This subject has received more attention in recent years with the development of redaction-criticism. From a historical-critical point of view the issue is, how much has the theological tendency of the particular writer actually shaped the infancy narrative and how much has come from the previous tradition?<sup>143</sup>

## 7. Historical Tradition

Brown brings out the problems attached to a complete rejection of an historical tradition. Both Matthew (1-2) and John, it seems, were involved in an apologetic against an earlier charge of illegitimacy. If this charge was earlier than the gospels then it must be early. But then how did it arise in the first place? One must either accept the historicity of the virginal conception or be driven to a *'very unpleasant alternative'*.<sup>144</sup>

The possibility of family tradition, or apostolic tradition is another question which cannot be dissociated from that of dating. Is it possible to allow for an extensive theologumenal or midrashic development between the original family or apostolic testimony and the infancy narratives if both seem to come from the early Palestinian Christian environment? Until how late would the influence of the family of Jesus, or the original disciples have lasted in the Christian community? The dating of the Synoptic gospels becomes crucial at this point.

When it comes to possible historical traditions, or events which seem to have a basis in the historical background, Brown raises the possibility of *'verisimilitude'*. In other words, correspondences between the infancy narratives and other historical data (Herod's character, planetary conjunctions) may be only apparent or co-incidental.<sup>145</sup>

These questions will require some answer before we can make any historical-critical conclusions. The historical-critical approach to the infancy narratives is thus many-faceted and raises a number of complex and often interrelated subjects. One subject which is raised with particular vigour is that of presuppositions and historiographical methods.

## The use of Presuppositions in the Historical Approach to the Infancy Narratives

Differing presuppositions as to the '*miraculous*' elements in the infancy narratives have bedeviled research more than any other single issue. Unfortunately, modern commentators and writers still tend to fall on either side of this issue. Where earlier writers revealed their presuppositions, later writers tend not to do so. It is not really possible to come to any conclusions on the historicity of the narratives without facing this question. Boslooper has given a thorough and lucid description of differing presuppositions from the Reformation to the Tübingen School.<sup>146</sup> His treatment of conservative '*supernaturalistic*' presuppositions in reaction to the earlier approach stemming from the Enlightenment, goes up to the first few decades of the twentieth century (Machen 1930).<sup>147</sup> Presuppositional issues have developed a great deal since this period. The period between that covered by Boslooper and today has seen the refinement of the historical-critical method, the reaction to the positivism of the historical-critical method in the dialectical approach, and recently the reaction to the dialectical approach in the re-assessment of the historical-critical method by scholars such as Wolfhart Pannenberg and Richard Niebuhr.<sup>148</sup>

At this point we will pick up some of the central issues. Prior to Strauss, whose influence he regards as pivotal in regard to the infancy narratives, Boslooper finds three major influences. First, the writers of the Renaissance such as Francis Bacon, René Descartes and Thomas Hobbes established the priority of reason over other forms of authority. These writers separated revelation and miracle from the laws of nature. However David Hume, John Toland and Voltaire amongst others turned the attention of naturalistic philosophy on religion as well. This led to a total rejection of miracle as a transgression of the laws of nature. It was this philosophical influence which caused Reimarus to reject the biblical miracles, '*no miracles can help the matter, because miracles are unnatural events, as improbable as they are incredible*'.<sup>149</sup> Together with naturalistic assumptions Reimarus used Aristotelian standards of non-contradiction, '*contradiction is a devil and the father of lies, who refuses to be driven out either by fasting and prayer or by mirac'les*'.<sup>150</sup>

Second, writers such as Paulus were dissatisfied with merely rejecting the miraculous stories of the bible and decided that they should be explained instead. This led to the psychological approach to the gospels.

Third, under the influence of Kant and Hegel, other scholars sought to disentangle the outward details of the stories from their inner ethical or religious value. Schleiermacher for instance, while rejecting the probability of the miracles in the infancy story, found value in the poetic

imagination of the narratives.

Strauss sought to move beyond these ideas with his mythical approach to the gospels. He mentioned, as his major premise, '*that all things are linked together by a chain of cause and effects which suffers no interruption*'.<sup>151</sup> '*Indeed, no just notion of the nature of history is possible without the perception of the inviolability of the chain of finite causes...*'<sup>152</sup> He associated with this assumption the philosophical presupposition of Idealism. He assumption relevant to the infancy narratives is that a narrative is mythical if it is poetic, or if the actors converse in hymns or in any elevated or abnormal manner. Narratives containing both the miraculous and the fulfilment of Jewish Messianic expectations must be judged as non-historical.<sup>153</sup>

The reaction to this kind of thinking Boslooper terms '*supernaturalistic theological interpretation*'. This he divides into an earlier group of continental scholars such as Olshausen, Weiss and Neander and a slightly later group of English-speaking scholars such as Sweet, Orr, Gore, and Machen. The weakness of many of the viewpoints expressed by these writers is in the equally dogmatic set of assumptions which they bring to the text, such as the inspiration of scripture and the '*historical truth of the evangelical narrative*'.<sup>154</sup> Another assumption was that since Jesus is the unique Son of God, his entrance into the world should of necessity be surrounded with miraculous events.

It would be naive of course to suggest that history can be pursued without presuppositions. The historian who thinks that he is without presuppositions is merely unaware of the ones he has. However, the approach to the infancy narratives can and should be with an historical method which avoids the extremes which have been mentioned and which is critically aware of the nature and use of assumptions which are proper to the historical-critical method. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

## THE HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH TO THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

The main contention of this thesis is that a truly hermeneutical approach to the infancy narratives is difficult to find. The fifth and sixth chapters will explore this approach in particular. At this state we wish to indicate why we feel the subject is still relatively unexplored and to take those hermeneutical approaches which have been made as our starting point for the subsequent exploration.

The historical survey of the dogmatic approach and the description of the various historical

issues reflects the subject matter of most of the books, articles and commentaries that one can find. Very few do not deal with these basic issues. We have noted Barth's theological analysis with appreciation. But one can ask where else one can find an attempt to exegete what the texts are actually trying to say? A recent discipline which seeks to listen to the theology of the gospel writers is redaction-criticism. Perhaps more hermeneutical content will be found in this quarter?

In the analysis of Lucan theology two recent writers may be noted, namely Hans Conzelmann and Oscar Cullmann.<sup>155</sup> The difficulty in the case of the former is that he does not give much attention to the Lucan infancy narrative.<sup>156</sup> This is because, *'In the structure as it stands, the birth story does not introduce one of the three phases'* which are crucial for Conzelmann's understanding of Lucan theology.<sup>157</sup> In addition, the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist in the infancy narrative runs counter to Conzelmann's theory of that relationship in the remainder of Luke-Acts.<sup>158</sup> It has therefore been left to other scholars to explore the significance of Luke's infancy narrative within the structure of Conzelmann's system.

H.H. Oliver examines three elements in Luke 1-2; John, as prophet of the most high, Jesus as Son of the most high, and the power of the most high. Instead of John being placed in the epoch of Israel (Conzelmann) Oliver places him in the epoch of Jesus. Jesus, as Son of the most high is portrayed in Luke 1-2 in terms of well known Lucan themes; his place in Jewish and Roman history; the centrality of Jerusalem, Luke's universalism, and Lucan Christological titles such as *σωτηρ, μέγας* etc. The power of the Spirit, another Lucan theological theme, is also given prominence in the infancy narrative. The infancy narrative is therefore an integral part of Lucan theology.<sup>159</sup>

W. Barnes Tatum also works within Conzelmann's framework but comes to opposite conclusions. Through an examination of the work of the Spirit (and particularly the Spirit of prophecy), Tatum concludes that John is part of the epoch of Israel. In fact, Luke uses *'the birth narrative to characterise that period in salvation history before the ministry of Jesus as the Epoch of Israel'*.<sup>160</sup>

Despite differing conclusions the constructive element in this approach is the way in which it focuses on the issue of eschatological transition, which is crucial to the Lucan infancy narrative.

Cullmann's salvation-historical approach to N.T. theology is well known, and Luke-Acts is a particularly good basis for this theology. Again other scholars have worked out the implications of this type of approach to the infancy narrative.

Paul Minear's examination of the infancy narrative gives much attention to refuting Conzelmann's schematization of Lucan theology. His main point is to show how these chapters fall within the time of eschatological fulfilment and manifest a *'theology of the time of fulfillment'*. Numerous typically Lucan themes are to be found in Luke 1-2. These show that the narrative should be understood through the eyes of Luke himself, the historical editor.<sup>161</sup>

Howard Marshall similarly rejects Conzelmann's approach to Lucan theology and feels that Cullmann's salvation-historical concept of the N.T. is to be preferred. He does not believe that salvation-history is more central to Luke than to the N.T. in general, but suggests that *'the idea of salvation supplies the key to the theology of Luke. Not salvation-history, but salvation itself.'*<sup>162</sup> With this key he is able to make a fruitful examination of the idea in Luke 1-2.<sup>163</sup>

One must conclude that the redactional approach to Luke 1-2 is hermeneutically fruitful.

Redaction criticism of Matthew's infancy narrative will be given attention in the fourth and fifth chapters. Here we will simply mention that the redactional approach to Matthew has also proved to be fruitful. Charles Davis, whose approach to Matthew is redaction-critical, has made a fruitful examination of the Matthean genealogy.<sup>164</sup> Jack Dean Kingsbury, who explores the structure, Christology and theology of Matthew as a whole (i.e. a broadly redactional approach) has made a fruitful examination of the central focus of Matthew's theology, which includes the infancy narrative.<sup>165</sup> Heinz Joachim Held has revealed a characteristic use of catch-words which focus on the relationship between the request of faith, the word of Jesus and the miraculous deed of Jesus. This characteristic is also found in Matthew 1-2.<sup>166</sup>

A redactional approach has therefore been more hermeneutically fruitful than other approaches to the infancy narratives. However, the source-critical approach has revealed that Matthean and Lucan theology is one element amongst many in the infancy narratives. Is there then an approach which can allow the infancy narratives to communicate their true significance?

One particular contribution must be singled out as, in our view, the nearest to a full hermeneu-

tic of the infancy narratives. It is in many ways the starting point of the real thrust of this thesis.

In his article on *'The Interpreter and the Birth Narratives'* Minear discusses the historians analysis of the stories and the stories analysis of the historian. In other words he is proposing a full hermeneutic which seeks to bring an encounter between the historian and the content of the narratives. To quote his conclusion,

*'only when the stories are the medium for a new encounter between God and man, for a new recognition of God's descent into the form of our existence, only then will they be rightly interpreted'.<sup>167</sup>*

In his exposition Minear quotes Søren Kierkegaard. His approach here obviously has some relationship to the dialectical hermeneutic of Heidegger, Dilthey and Collingwood which became so important to Bultmann. The extent to which the infancy narratives use the language of encounter means that elements at least of this hermeneutical tradition will need to be included in our investigation. However, the problem of the over-emphasis of the subjective pole of hermeneutics (the modern interpreter) has created serious problems for this approach. As Anthony Thiselton has shown, both an ancient text in its autonomy and the role of the interpreter need to be given due place to produce a *'fusion'* of the *'two horizons'*.<sup>168</sup> This is precisely how Minear proposes the infancy narratives should be interpreted and is in substantial agreement with the hermeneutical theory of Paul Ricoeur which forms the basis of the structural approach to the infancy narratives adopted in the fifth chapter.

Minear shows that the infancy narratives already bear the marks of interpretation in the Christian community. The original events and the use of the tradition about those events in the *Sitz im Glauben* and *Sitz im Loben* of the early community are interwoven in the narratives. *'The Sitz im Leben...indicates the total content of three stories, fused together; the story of Jesus, of the new Israel and of the disciple...the exegete must himself stand at the point of convergence of these three stories'*.<sup>169</sup>

We will bear these remarks in mind in our study of the infancy narratives.

## CONCLUSION

Three conclusions are to be drawn from the three approaches we have examined in this





chapter.

Firstly, we have not given attention to dogmatic issues because we wish to enter in any depth into the field of systematic theology in this thesis. Our aim has been to show how prior dogmatic interests have tended to dominate the questions that have been put to the text. While such interests are important from one perspective there is a real question as whether they are the most appropriate questions for an exegesis of the infancy narratives. The fifth and sixth chapters will attempt to go beyond the traditional questions that are put to the infancy narratives.

The examination of the historical-critical approach has raised numerous questions. Some do not need to be discussed further to any length. Others require attention. The fourth chapter will be devoted to these issues. Almost as important as the issues themselves are the presuppositions with which one assesses the various issues. This is an area which is far from being resolved. Consequently a fair amount of space will be given to the question of historical method, and this will be the subject of the next chapter.

While the historical-critical area has its unanswered questions it is nevertheless one which has received considerable attention. An example of an exhaustive study of the infancy narratives with the full spectrum of historical-critical tools is the recent work by Raymond Brown.<sup>170</sup> It is in the third area, namely hermeneutics, that much exploration is still to be done. This will be the primary interest of our investigation of the infancy narratives, although the hermeneutical interest can never be dissociated from the historical.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE INFANCY NARRATIVES AND THE NATURE OF HISTORY

In the previous chapter we drew attention to two different schools of thought that exist in the interpretation of the infancy narratives. It was also suggested that the issue between them is the question of historical probability. We now return to this question.

The infancy narratives are possibly more embedded in the language of '*miracle*' than any other part of the N.T. A number of the chief figures express themselves in prophetic utterances. Angelic appearances and revelatory dreams occur in rapid succession. The work of the Holy Spirit is mentioned a great deal, and above all, the central figure is born by a direct operation of the divine Spirit without human procreation. Those who propose a legendary origin are therefore more confident here than in any other section of the N.T. Here, if at all, the canons of historical-criticism must be used to the full.

There is one other area where the problem of historical probability meets us with equal urgency, and that is in the resurrection narratives. Here again, we are faced with the '*marvellous*', with the '*miraculous*', and here again historical-criticism has been most critical of the N.T. documents.

The similarity between the infancy narratives and the resurrection narratives is not limited to these common characteristics. Conservative apologists of the infancy narratives have often drawn attention to the theological connection between the two, as in fact have various others.<sup>1</sup>

We may go further and suggest that the infancy narratives not only have a vital connection with the resurrection narratives, but they are part of the whole witness of the N.T. documents to the person and work of Christ. The main books of the Gospels are no less embedded in the language of '*miracle*'. Thus in dealing with the infancy narratives in terms of historical probability one is in fact facing the issue of the person of Christ in terms of historical probability. To accept the witness of the infancy narratives in any measure one must simultaneously accept the uniqueness of Christ as an historical figure. And this is precisely where the great problem lies. Can we really speak of a '*unique*' '*historical*' figure?

By using the word '*unique*' do we not therefore dispense with the '*historical*'?

We need not labour the point that this issue has plagued N.T. research ever since the rise of historical-criticism. We are faced here, in fact, with the whole debate which began with the '*Quest for the Historical Jesus*', or in the terminology of Martin Kähler, with the conflict between the '*Historic, Biblical Christ*', and the Jesus of '*Historical-Criticism*.'<sup>2</sup>

At the risk of over-simplification one may say that there are basically three positions which have been adopted in this debate.

1. Firstly, there have been those who have completely surrendered to the historical-critical method. Those who have adopted this position have usually felt that the historical method is an expression of the modern scientific world view. It is therefore impossible to approach the N.T. '*scientifically*' without assuming the presuppositions of the modern historical method. Any attempt to escape this must be rejected as a return to the pre-scientific age. This has meant in practice that much, if not most of the N. T. has been regarded as legendary and the person of Christ has been defined in purely human terms. In this case the message of the N.T. can only be accepted as in some sense a symbol of religious truth.

2. Secondly, there have been those who have attempted to live in both worlds. Their justification for this has been the belief that the '*two moralities of knowledge*' are not in fact incompatible.<sup>3</sup> In this case, the canons of the historical-critical method have been adhered to, while at the same time the '*factuality*' of the biblical events has been accepted under another understanding of history (i.e. *Geschichte* or *Heilsgeschichte*).

3. Thirdly, there are those who have critically examined the historical-critical method from the vantage point of Christian belief, and have attempted to reformulate it in such a manner as to open the way for an understanding of history which includes unique and revelatory events.

Again at the risk of over-simplification, one may say that these three positions have been adopted during three successive stages of N. T. research. The first position was universally adopted by those who were involved in the '*Quest for the Historical Jesus*'. The second position was adopted by the dialectical school which came to its fullest expression in the theologies of Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. The third position has not yet come to final fruition. However, it has been ably presented by Wolfhart Pannenberg in what Carl E.

Braaten has called '*The New Theology of the Resurrection*'.<sup>4</sup>

An attempt will now be made to examine these positions in order to lay a solid foundation for the historical-critical analysis of the infancy narratives. As we have already noted, the infancy narratives are vitally linked to the resurrection. This means that discussion regarding the latter will automatically relate to the former.

In dealing with the first position the thought of two scholars will be taken as representative, namely, Ernst Troeltsch and Francis Herbert Bradley.<sup>5</sup>

In the second category, we shall examine the work of Martin Kähler.<sup>6</sup> It is generally agreed that the dualistic separation of history into *Historie* and *Geschichte* originated with him. To quote Carl E. Braaten;

*Martin Kähler must also receive a large share of the credit or the blame for the separation of Christology from the historical Jesus... he invented the now popular distinction between the two German words for history, Historie and Geschichte.<sup>7</sup>*

Though Kähler cannot be identified with the modern proponents of dialectical theology, his position contained within it the seeds which eventually flowered into the present dialectical theology. During the course of the examination various recent positions will be discussed.

As representatives of the third approach, three scholars will be mentioned: Richard R. Niebuhr, Wolfhart Pannenberg and John Warwick Montgomery.<sup>8</sup>

It is our thesis that the first two approaches to the historical-critical method need to be rejected in favour of the third. Reasons for this will be given in the following discussion.

## THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD AS DEFINED BY THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS

### Francis Herbert Bradley: The Presuppositions of Critical History

Bradley is particularly helpful in this discussion because he stands half-way between positivism and relativism. It is generally accepted that those involved in the '*Quest for the Historical Jesus*' operated with a positivistic view of history. Those involved in the so-called '*New*

*Quest'* have drawn attention to this. Bradley strongly criticises positivism and yet is unable to transcend it completely. He therefore gives us an insight into the real issues of positivistic history.

For the first part of his essay he strongly attacks positivism.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to positivism, with its belief in historical objectivity, he holds that every '*sensation*' must somehow be organised by the mind in order to be appropriated, and in that process of assimilation judgement must take place. Further, such judgement will inevitably be determined by present knowledge, by the present known world of the subject. The simplest historical '*fact*', to exist at all for the subject, must come under critical judgement. Before we can even arrive at a '*fact*' we must judge the data we receive. Every so-called historical fact is already a theory. Bradley's position could well be summarised in the modern phrase from the philosophy of science: '*all facts are theory laden*'.<sup>10</sup>

In thus rejecting positivism of the type common to nineteenth century historians, Bradley places himself in the more recent stream of relativistic thought.<sup>11</sup>

What then is the correct presupposition for the critical historian? To this, Bradley answers '*the world of modern science*', and this world in turn must be defined as that which is subject to uniformity and causality. For science to exist at all, for the process of experimentation and induction to be at all meaningful, science must presume the '*stability*' and lawfulness of nature. It must presume the '*universality of law, and what loosely may be termed casual connection*'.<sup>12</sup>

This he calls an '*absolute presupposition*'. It is true that scientific theories depend upon experiment rather than presupposition, but such experimental data cannot contradict the lawfulness of the world which must be presumed for the experiment to be meaningful in the first place.

*Can science testify to a breach of the law which forms its presupposition? This would amount to a contradiction in terms.*

Thus,

*both science and history we find to be agreed, namely in this, that a fact which asserts itself as without a cause, or without a consequence, is no fact at all.*<sup>13</sup>

It is no good to argue that the freedom of the will of man demands the possibility of unique events. This would mean that human events are totally irrational, and consequently the very possibility of writing rational history would disappear.

This leads Bradley to state the principle of analogy. The criterion the historian uses in judging the past is the present world of his knowledge. Is it at all possible, then, to accept as fact events which have no analogy with our own experience? This he believes would only be possible under two conditions. Firstly, we may enlarge the area of our experience if the non-analogous fact were to be experienced by ourselves personally. In this case we would critically assess it in the light of our own experience. Secondly, our field of experience may be enlarged upon by the testimony of another, if we can be sure that such an observer is possessed of the same world view as our own, and has the same ability of critical assessment. In such conditions, with the utmost caution and consideration, even a '*mesmeric phenomena*' may be judged as factual. However, if the observer differs in standpoint from ourselves or if we are not able to demonstrate his integrity, our field of experience cannot be enlarged so as to include completely non-analogous '*events*'.

*Testimony goes beyond individual experience,  
but not beyond our experience; or it takes us  
beyond our experience if it takes us with it.*<sup>14</sup>

A possible objection to this argument is that the so-called '*world*' of the subject may not be that systematised. How then can '*a confused and unsystematised world of consciousness*' be the absolute criterion for all events? Bradley answers '*it is to such a world that the critical intelligence awakens*'. And by awaking it begins to critically assess this world. The inner '*world*' of the subject is thus not '*confused*' but in fact systematised.

Bradley then asks about the nature of historical proof and states his belief that, as opposed to science, history can only deal with probability. All historical proof is in terms of probability. But this places even more burdens upon the principle of analogy. It means that the sole ground for accepting a historical proof therefore rests upon the analogy of past evidence with present experience.<sup>15</sup>

A further burden upon the principle of analogy becomes evident when Bradley considers the nature of historical process. Here his indebtedness to Hegel becomes evident. Bradley shows his allegiance to the idea of progressive consciousness (Hegel's '*mind*' or '*spirit*'). He notes that '*the consciousness of the earlier stage of humanity is never the consciousness of a later development*'.

*Not only is man's nature progressive, but history is concerned, so to speak, with the most human part of humanity, and hence the most fully progressive.*<sup>16</sup>

But this means that the vantage of any historical witness of a by-gone age can never be the same as that of the present observer. The only possible case where our present field of experience may be enlarged to include non-analogous and unique events is, in fact, impossible. Further, even if such an advanced witness could be found, we could never cross-examine him to discover whether his testimony was reliable. His existence has forever vanished in the past. Bradley concludes that history can allow for no non-analogous events in the past at all. Such events may have taken place, but the historian has no access to them and consequently, for him, they do not exist. However, the restriction of the principle of analogy need not trouble the historian.

*The present experience, which is open to our research, is so wide in its extent, is so infinitely rich in its manifold details, that to expect an event in the past to which nothing analogous now corresponds may fairly be considered a mere extravagance.*<sup>17</sup>

Bradley lastly deals with an objection to his position by Paley. Paley asks what is to be done with non-analogous evidence which cannot be rationally explained in terms of natural causality. *'Testimony is a phenomenon'*. The historian must account for it. If he propounds a theory which simply cannot account for certain testimonies then he must abandon his theory. Bradley replies that such an argument is in effect *'to confound that which is negatively with that which is positively irrational'*.<sup>18</sup> The very existence of such *'evidence'* as truly evidential depends upon it being accepted as *'real'* by the modern historian. But if it contradicts lawful causality it cannot be judged as *'real'* or *'existent'* by the historian. It is, therefore, non-existent evidence which does not have to be accounted for. It remains an *'un-assimilated crudity.'*

Ernst Troeltsch: *Historiography*<sup>19</sup>

Despite his tendencies to overcome it, Troeltsch writes with a positivistic understanding of

history. He divides historiography into two categories, the purely scientific and the descriptive. These two categories must be clearly distinguished.

*Insofar as historical thought purports to be scientific, its specifically theoretical or scientific element must be clearly marked off and defined.* <sup>20</sup>

Descriptive historical works are '*not purely scientific at all,*' and all the '*secondary elements*' whether they be aesthetic, ethical or sociological, must be '*scrupulously guarded against and excluded*'.<sup>21</sup>

Scientific history must be distinguished from all others by its '*purely scientific attitude to the facts*'. Troeltsch is aware of the problems raised by such a definition of history. Historical causality is especially concerned with the realm of '*psychical causation*'. Does this not mean that the historian must be drawn into personal judgment in order to understand such causation sympathetically? Does this not inevitably mean that a subjective element will become involved in his judgments? He admits that this element is inevitable. However he denies that such an argument can '*subvert our fundamental principle*' since the causes which the historian studies are '*taken account of as facts only*'. The subjective attitude of the historian towards the facts must be discounted. The historian's personal judgment will inevitably be involved as '*a heuristic principle*', but he ought to be as objective as possible, and the '*ought-to-be must in turn always be separated from what really is*'. The historian's personal judgment must always '*give way before the evidence of the real facts*'.<sup>22</sup>

Troeltsch operates with three principles. These have been stated by Harvey as the principle of criticism, the principle of analogy, and the principle of correlation.<sup>23</sup>

### 1. The Principle of Criticism

History can never deal with the whole of reality. It can only deal with particular periods and particular '*historical aggregates*'.

Further, new information will always become available on every subject.

*The accession of new material, the fresh sifting of facts by criticism, new ideas and views in the linking of causes to historical aggregates - all of these call for ever new be-*



*ginnings, and lead to a revision of previous delineations. The writing of history can never be exhaustive, and never complete.* <sup>24</sup>

Harvey adds that the conclusion which follows is that no judgment about the past can ever be considered to be absolutely true. History must ever remain in the area of probability. <sup>25</sup>

## 2. The Principle of Analogy.

To quote Troeltsch,

*On the analogy of the events known to us we seek by conjecture and sympathetic understanding to explain and reconstruct the past... Since we discern the same process of phenomena in operation in the past as in the present...we gain the idea...of integral continuity.* <sup>26</sup>

As we have seen Bradley insists on this principle. Troeltsch is not as emphatic on this principle as he is on the third.

## 3. The Principle of Correlation.

We could equally define this as the principle of causality. Troeltsch affirms this principle as follows;

*The sole task of history in its specifically theoretical aspects is to explain every movement, process, state, and nexus of things by reference to the web of its causal relations. That is, in a word, the whole function of purely scientific investigation.* <sup>27</sup>

The importance of this principle for Troeltsch is evident from his description of this as the 'sole task' and 'whole function' of scientific history. <sup>28</sup>

A certain qualification exists in his thinking at this point. Historical causality has to do with the psychical and not the natural. Troeltsch was not closed to the belief that in terms of such psychological motivation and causality history is open to unique and new events. While science seeks to discover general laws, history investigates the individual and therefore the unique. It includes an element of contingency, and can therefore allow for '*talent and genius, which sometimes occur.*' However, such unique events must be circumscribed under a more general concept of causality. '*They may, to a very great extent at least, be brought*

under the conception of natural law.' <sup>29</sup> The reason for this limitation of the contingent and the unique is found in Troeltsch's principle of development, which is closely allied to his principle of causality.

*The conception of historico-empirical development denotes the progress that issues from the essential element of certain psychological efforts...the dynamic element in psychological forces which are not exhausted in a single manifestation, but work out towards a result - forces in which exists a tendency to a development akin to logical evolution.* <sup>30</sup>

Troeltsch could say of this issue,

*This... is really our main problem, viz. that relating to the nature of historical causation.* <sup>31</sup>

To many contemporary scholars this still remains our 'main problem'. This becomes evident when the adherence to this principle is still strongly affirmed by Rudolf Bultmann and those who are involved in the so-called 'New Quest'.

### Assessment and Criticism

In attempting to assess the thought of Bradley and Troeltsch it needs to be mentioned, firstly, that what we mean by 'critical history' is much broader than their definition which we have analysed so far. There are in fact far more fundamental attitudes and criteria which define the concept of critical history.

In the area of biblical criticism in particular, a range of ideas is included under the general concept of historical criticism; the distinction between dogmatic theology and historical criticism, the discovery of the date and authenticity of biblical books, the use of the grammatico-historical principle, the fact that the biblical documents should be read as any other historical documents, and the attempt to discover the original text of the ancient documents. In the area of historical criticism in general the following principles have been offered as proper to historical method; the collecting of the evidence and the enquiry into its value, the principle of methodological doubt, the autonomy of the historian and his right to 'confer' authority on a document, the structuring of the evidence prior to its presentation by the historian, the critical examination of the evidence and the

elimination of various possibilities, the willingness to allow the facts to speak for themselves and openness to the possibility that absolutely anything might be true, provided it does not dispense with the law of non-contradiction, the use of proper inference in historical argumentation, the search for causal connections between events, the search for those facts which are truly significant as historical causes, and the desire to allow the text to speak for itself.<sup>32</sup>

The area is so vast and varied that Edgar Krentz has been led to remark;

*...it is anything but clear just what we mean  
when we use the phrase **historical method**  
(or as it is more usual in biblical studies, his-  
torical criticism)'.<sup>33</sup>*

The point which we wish to make is that the particular understanding of historical method which was advocated by Bradley and Troeltsch cannot be regarded as either exhaustive or determinative.

It is possible to have a truly critical method without necessarily adhering to those principles which have been so problematic for N.T. research. There is '*critical method*' and critical method.

Secondly, it has become an accepted conclusion that the '*Quest for the Historical Jesus*' ended in a cul-de-sac. N.T. scholarship has been generally sceptical about the possibility of obtaining an objective historical account of the life of Jesus ever since Albert Schweitzer's notable contribution, and the whole dialectical school has sought for an escape route from this historical cul-de-sac. It is notable, however, that in Britain, where the definition of '*critical history*' has been somewhat different (as per Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort) the old Quest has never really been abandoned. Regarding the European '*Quest*' it is ironical that the Historical-critical method has come under the judgement of history itself. It is no longer considered as a real possibility. Those involved in the '*New Quest*' make it '*clear*' that they are involved in a different enterprise. Obviously, something was wrong with the old Quest. What was it?

The general consensus is twofold:

- a) It is believed that the problem lies with positivistic historiography, i.e. with an attempt to write unbiased history, which is now regarded as impossible, (à la Bradley, W. Dilthey and Collingwood).

b) It is believed that the old Quest operated with a false view of the Gospels. They were approached as biographical material. It is now believed that the Gospels are rather '*kerygmatic*' material, i.e. they were written '*from faith to faith*'.

It is our belief that such a diagnosis of the failure of the old Quest is an oversimplification and places the blame in the wrong area. The two criticisms of the old Quest given above are quite correct, but, this is not where the real problem lies. The real problem was correctly diagnosed by Ernst Troeltsch, and lies with the definition of critical history as defined by Bradley and Troeltsch himself.

Before criticising their definition it must be plainly stated that we are not rejecting in any way the necessity of critical research itself. Neither are we rejecting all of the concepts of critical history as defined by Bradley and Troeltsch. It is our belief that certain metaphysical and philosophical presuppositions stemming from Deism and the Enlightenment were at work in their concept of history which blurred the proper understanding of critical method. Our task is therefore to distinguish between that which is proper and that which is not proper to historical criticism.<sup>34</sup>

To begin with, all the principles which we have mentioned apart from those propounded by Bradley and Troeltsch are quite acceptable if properly defined and are not particularly problematic in the area of N.T. research.<sup>35</sup>

Coming to the three principles of Troeltsch, the first must similarly be left to stand. There can be no doubt that all historical facts, theories and hypotheses are subject to probability.<sup>36</sup> The degree of probability will obviously be much higher in some disciplines than in others, and history does not always operate with indisputable probabilities, but this is not usually considered a great drawback to the discipline.<sup>37</sup>

The problem arises with Troeltsch's second and third principles, and elements of Bradley's position. Even here though, our criticism does not amount to an outright rejection of the principles themselves. The vital issue is the exact definition of these principles.

It is first necessary to indicate the problems that have arisen in the use of these principles. In modern scientific theory it is often noted that the test of an hypothesis is its fruitfulness and its ability to deal with the data. Methods themselves are not the products of a priori beliefs, but arise out of a dialectic relationship between the subject and the object of study.

John Montgomery quotes Ludwig Wittgenstein as follows;

*Theories are nets cast to catch what we call "the world": to rationalise, to explain and to master it. We endeavour to make the mesh ever finer and finer.* <sup>38</sup>

What applies to scientific theories can equally be applied to historiographical principles. They are there to deal best with the material of history. If they fail, then they need to be revised or 'tightened'.

The principles of correlation and analogy fail completely, if defined in this manner (stated above), to deal with the material of history in the case of Jesus of Nazareth. The reason for this seems so obvious that it need hardly be mentioned, and yet this issue lies at the root of many of the problems encountered in N.T. research.

In the N.T. documents we have supposedly the story of a unique individual who was not quite like anyone who existed before him or who has existed since. The historian must, if he is true to his discipline, suspend all judgment upon such a claim. The historian must approach his subject with an open mind,

*with the conviction that absolutely anything may be true provided that it does not offend against the logical law of contradictions.* <sup>39</sup>

To remain true to his critical task he must not decide the issue before he has investigated the evidence. However, in a narrow definition of the principle of analogy, especially as defined by Bradley, no completely non-analogous event can be accepted as having a true existence at all. Jesus of Nazareth is supposedly just such a non-analogous and unique individual. There is no way that a modern historian can expand his field of experience to include such a unique event which, by very definition, is unrepeatable. In this manner two principles within the 'critical-historical' method stand in total antithesis, and to use yet another principle of this method, by the law of logical non-contradiction one must be true and one must be false. With such a definition of the principle of analogy, N.T. research is of necessity bound to take only one course in the investigation of the person of Christ. It must reject all elements which transcend ordinary human experience and fit the facts into a purely human mould. This means that the nature of this purely human mould cannot be ascertained from the historical documents themselves (because they proclaim a transcendent

figure) and must of necessity be forthcoming from the historian. The result is that he will tend to make the mould in his own image, since every historian must have some presuppositions and beliefs. The fact that he does this is not because he is naive about historical positivism but because of the principle of analogy so defined. <sup>40</sup>

The principle of correlation or causality presents similar difficulties. Troeltsch, it is true, distinguished between psychical and natural causality. Bradley, on the other hand, identified the nexus of cause and effect with the nineteenth century view of natural science. This understanding of causality is still accepted by a great number of N.T. scholars. Both Rudolf Bultmann and those involved in the 'New Quest' still maintain that any interruption in the continuum of causality must be rejected as a mythological and non-historical 'event'. <sup>41</sup>

In addition to the principle of correlation, Troeltsch adhered to his principle of progress, by which he meant that no individual event could be regarded as having exhausted the meaning of history. No individual fact could be regarded as a '*final revelation of the absolute spirit*', and *history is no place for absolute religion and absolute personalities.*' <sup>42</sup>

However the N.T. documents claim just such a unique event in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and just such an absolute personality in the Christ who was vindicated by that resurrection. But the historical-critical method as defined by the principle of correlation cannot countenance such a possibility. The central message of the N.T. must therefore be rejected out of hand. This, however, has produced an historical anomaly, if not an historical embarrassment, because the origins of the Christian community and the nature of the documents themselves become completely disjointed. The causal connection between the resurrection and subsequent history of the church becomes disjointed by the very principle of causality. It would not be too much to say that this principle destroys itself when dealing with the resurrection.

Clearly, in terms of a '*net cast to catch what we call "the world"*', (in this case the world of historical evidence) *to rationalise, to explain, and to master it*', the principles of analogy and correlation must be judged to have failed. In terms of the philosophy of science, this means they must either be discarded or adapted. In this case the latter is demanded, because the complete rejection of these principles would create further problems. Especially in regard to the principle of analogy; to reject it outright would make historical investigation impossible. The historian needs to know that some common ground exists between himself

and the past. Otherwise he has no means of understanding the past at all. If he cannot presume that human nature is in some sense the same, that the human mind operates in broadly the same manner, then historical investigation becomes impossible.

We turn now to our criticism of these principles. We begin with the principle of correlation which to Troeltsch was the problem.

### The Principle of Correlation

The problem of correlation or causation is not unique to theology. According to William H. Dray *'Few theoretical questions about their discipline seem to have bothered historians more than this one'*. Further, it is true to say that the climate of opinion has completely changed since the nineteenth century. Dray states the belief that there is a widespread distrust of causal judgment in modern historiography. A group of American historians have defined *'cause'* as

*an ambiguous term of varied and complex meaning...a convenient figure of speech, describing motives, influences, forces, and other antecedent interrelations not fully understood.* <sup>43</sup>

It needs to be made plain therefore, that causality cannot be regarded with the awe which seems to have surrounded the concept in times past. Certainly it should not be used in a dictatorial sense, so that the modern historian is only allowed to accept events of the past if they fit into a narrow definition of causal possibility. Such a narrow definition no longer exists. It would seem that, in this area, Rudolf Bultmann and those who adhere to his historiography may be operating with a definition which is no longer tenable.

Three leading scholars who have dealt with historiographical problems can be used as examples of the way in which modern historians are approaching the concept of causality.

The most devastating attack upon the concept has come from Karl R. Popper, who examines it in the light of linguistic analysis and the philosophy of science. <sup>44</sup> According to Popper, Darwin's hypothesis has the analytical character of a particular historical statement. It is not a universal law. There is in fact no such thing as a law of evolution. <sup>45</sup>

He terms *'historicism'* the attempt to be naively scientific about history, that is, to operate

with a 'scientistic' view of things. Its basic postulate is a law of evolution in society, which it has inherited from the idea of natural succession common to Comte, Mill and Darwin. This idea of progress is therefore a combination of Darwin's hypothesis with a metaphysical religious idea. A further difficulty which has resulted from the 'scientistic' attempt to be scientific, is that historicism has confused the terminology of natural science with that of sociology and history. Physical science uses terms such as 'dynamics', 'movements', 'laws of motion' and so on. These have been taken over into the humanities without the realization that they may mean something totally different in a different field of enquiry. In physics 'movement' refers to a change in position. In sociology it would supposedly refer to a change in the inner structure of society. But;

*The idea of the movement of society itself - the idea that society, like a physical body, can move as a whole along a certain path and in a certain direction - is merely a holistic confusion.* <sup>46</sup>

He concludes that;

*the poverty of historicism is its inability to see that the process of change may itself change.* <sup>47</sup>

E. H. Carr regards Popper's reaction to historicism as somewhat extreme. <sup>48</sup> He approaches the concept of causality from a more common-sense point of view. However, his position does not return in any way to Troeltsch's concept of causality. He begins, somewhat sarcastically, by noting that the word 'cause' is now out of fashion, and that historians are more inclined to speak in terms of 'explanation', or 'interpretation', or of 'the logic of the situation'. This new approach is the result of a reaction to Hegelian determinism. However, he feels one need not drop the word 'cause' if historians do, in fact, operate with some such notion. The truth is that in every situation there are a great number of causes. To speak of the cause, as if there were only one, would be simplistic. The historian rather operates with a 'hierarchy of causes' and then determines by a process of selection which is the 'cause of all causes' in a situation. He seeks to give the significant cause.



Secondly, there is the issue of contingency or, to use Carr's metaphor, the '*famous crux of Cleopatra's nose*'. The issue here is that such contingent factors in history are not in fact outside of causality.

*These so-called accidents in history represent a sequence of cause and effect interrupting-and, so to speak, clashing with - the sequence which the historian is primarily concerned to investigate.*<sup>50</sup>

We should not therefore accept the idea of history as a '*chapter of accidents*'. Such an idea would be as erroneous as the other extreme of inevitability, but without going to one extreme we do need to allow for the contingent and the unexpected.<sup>51</sup> It is noteworthy that his concept of causality is a flexible one - which certainly does not amount to Troeltsch's principle of correlation.<sup>52</sup>

R.G. Collingwood is equally far removed from Troeltsch in his view of causality. He makes a clear distinction between causality in science and causality in history. The scientist seeks to understand a thing '*from the outside*' whereas a historian seeks to understand things '*from the inside*'. The historian is concerned with human actions and hence with the thoughts and motivations which have causal significance. The idea of cause is used in an entirely different sense.

*When a scientist asks "why did that piece of litmus paper turn pink?" he means "on what kinds of occasions do pieces of litmus paper turn pink?". When an historian asks "why did Brutus stab Caesar?" , he means "what did Brutus think, which made him decide to stab Caesar?" The cause of the event, for him, means the thought in the mind of the person by whose agency the event came about: and this is not something other than the event, it is the inside of the event itself.*<sup>53</sup>

In Collingwood's view, when we speak of what '*caused*' a man to behave in a certain manner, we refer to those reasons which he had to act in that manner. We may even say that he was '*induced*' or '*persuaded*' to act in a certain manner. However, that does not mean that his free will was not involved. He still had to use the '*reason*' which was at his disposal. In this sense a '*cause*' can actually fail to produce the '*result*' because the agent involved does not decide to use it. This view has dispensed with all thought of a '*necessary connection*' between cause and effect.<sup>54</sup>

If we return now to Troeltsch's view of causality we notice how he made a similar distinction between natural and 'psychical' causation, and how he criticised Hegel for failing to make this distinction. However, we also noted that Troeltsch could not allow this distinction to go to its logical conclusion. The possibility of unique events had to be circumscribed by a more general concept of correlation. This limitation was due to his principle of development. It now becomes evident that Troeltsch was influenced, despite his criticism of Hegel, by a metaphysical notion of progress. His limitation of the unique is very similar to Marx's limitation of the unique into retardation and acceleration.

Following Carr we may say that the issue is not really the presence or total absence of causality, but different kinds of causality; biological, economic, or accidental, and one's view of the different kinds of causality that are possible will depend ultimately upon one's metaphysical vantage point or one's world view. Wherever that metaphysic is influenced by 'historicism', or a deterministic view of progress, one's view of causation will not allow for the unique. It was Troeltsch's failure (and by implication those involved in the 'Old Quest') that he was unaware of the influence of metaphysical presuppositions upon his own thought.

For N.T. criticism are we then to dispense altogether with the principle of correlation? We must answer this in the negative. Perhaps the simplest way of viewing the situation is that we should merely reverse Troeltsch's idea of circumscribing the unique with laws of causality, by circumscribing or limiting the laws of causality by the unique.

Pannenberg believes that the principle of correlation is important for instance, in showing that the history of Israel cannot be isolated from universal or secular history. This is because there is a correlation between all historical events and periods.

*An interpretation of the whole of history by means of the idea of development or any idea of an underlying teleology at all, conflicts with the contingency of individual events and is therefore unacceptable on theological as well as historical grounds. The possibility still remains, however, undisturbed by this criticism, of pointing out developmental unities of limited range within the historical process, which are nevertheless supported and modified on all sides by contingent events.* <sup>55</sup>

The principle of correlation, so defined, is quite acceptable to N.T. research and will not

produce the historical anomalies which were caused by the nineteenth century definition of the principle.

### The Principle of Analogy

1. If the principle of correlation can be said to rest, ultimately, in its problematical sense, on a metaphysical presupposition, the same can be said of the principle of analogy. In fact, it becomes evident that in this sense the two principles are really two sides of the same coin.

In the case of Bradley his tendency towards idealist philosophy has determined his epistemological approach to history.<sup>56</sup> His emphasis lies upon the fact that the human mind cannot perceive the world '*out there*' without working upon it and interpreting it. The knowing subject and his thought processes are emphasized rather than the known object in its independent reality. The great difficulty for him, therefore, is to extend this inner world to include non-analogous events, whether they be present or past. The difficulty of receiving non-analogous facts is the outworking of a subjective presupposition. In this regard, it is significant that Pannenberg discovers essentially the same problem in Troeltsch's approach to analogy. He notes the anthropocentricity and introspection inherent in his view.<sup>57</sup> It would seem then, that the principle of analogy in its problematical and narrow sense is the result of philosophical presuppositions. These presuppositions however cannot be regarded as necessary. It has been noted that empiricism, with its '*representative view of knowledge*' leads to the logical conclusion of solipsism.<sup>58</sup> It certainly seems to restrict the broadening of the '*world*' of the subject.

This problem becomes evident with Bradley when he has to deal with the objection which Paley brought against him. Paley asked what the historian would do with testimony which had to be accounted for, but which could not be included due to the principle of analogy. Bradley's reply is in terms of a completely circular argument. Non-analogous testimony cannot be included because it is not '*real*' for the historian. But why is it judged to be not '*real*'? The answer is that it is a non-analogous '*event*'. Pannenberg notes that historical enquiry has never been successful when it has engaged in '*absolutising extrapolations of analogies*'.

2. At another point Bradley is himself aware of an essential weakness in his position. The historian must work with a criterion. This criterion can only be the historian himself.

This means that the inner 'world' of the historian becomes the criterion for judging all historical evidence. The question is, what constitutes this inner world of the historian? In what way can it legitimately be regarded as authoritative?

Bradley's answer is that this inner world is the modern world, the world of physical science. This is where R.G. Collingwood finds his weakest point. In Bradley's view, the world the historian brings to his subject is something which is complete in itself before he begins his investigation. He regards it thus because of his estimation of nineteenth century science. *'This is where the positivism of his age begins to infect his thought'*.<sup>59</sup> The correct view of the historian's task is, in Collingwood's words, rather as follows;

*His criterion is...never ready-made; the experience from which it is derived is his experience of historical thinking, and it grows with every growth in his historical knowledge.*<sup>60</sup>

Another way of stating this view is that the scholar stands in dialectical relation to the object of his study. He will not only question the text, but will allow it to question himself, his methods, his conclusions and his presuppositions. The historian must be prepared to learn from the past. The principle of analogy as defined by Bradley and Troeltsch makes this impossible and therefore makes truly historical enquiry impossible. It has a wrong orientation both towards the past and the present. The past is not allowed to reveal anything new and the present is absolutised in terms of natural science. The fact is though - and this is universally recognised - that the nineteenth century view of science was in many ways a distorted one. The idea of the lawfulness of nature has undergone a radical change. It may be debatable whether the world view of modern science since the discovery of the theory of relativity and the theory of indeterminacy allows specifically for the miraculous. It does seem clear that modern science would certainly not accept the mechanistic view of nature found in Newtonian physics. This extreme use of the principle of analogy must therefore be rejected as an outmoded concept, no longer applicable to modern research.

3. Pannenberg's criticism of the principle centres on the idea of 'homogeneity' which was inherent in Troeltsch's definition. As he interprets Troeltsch;

*Its meaning is that all differences should be comprehended in a uniform, universal homo-*

*geneity. In this form the postulate of the homogeneity of all events leads to a constriction of the historical question itself.* <sup>61</sup>

In the proper use of this principle it should operate as a yardstick to test the 'non-homogeneous'. The particularity of phenomena should not be lost in an over-emphasis of the typical. Theology is primarily interested in the particular and contingent because its object of study is the activity of the transcendent God who is free to produce within history that which is totally new. This means that the principle of analogy must have its limitation. It cannot be used as a criteria for the reality of events in the past.

*That a reported event bursts analogies with otherwise usual or repeatedly attested events is still no ground for disputing its facticity.* <sup>62</sup>

Does this negative limitation of analogy mean that we must dispense with the principle altogether? Pannenberg thinks not. It can be used in a positive sense, firstly to act as a yardstick for the understanding of non-homogeneous events, and secondly to reveal the non-factuality of mythical or legendary events by analogy with present experience, where in present experience similar beliefs are known to have no basis.

#### THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD IN THE THEOLOGY OF MARTIN KÄHLER AND IN THE DIALECTICAL SCHOOL

In discussing Martin Kähler we would do well to heed the challenge given by Ernst Käsemann, that even after a considerable lapse of time his book,

*has not lost its relevance and, despite all the attacks made upon it and the many reservations that one may have concerning it, it has also never been really refuted. Basically, Bultmann has only given, in his own way, support and preciseness to the thesis of this book.* <sup>63</sup>

It is easy to criticise a scholar at such a distance in time and to point to his errors. It is difficult to know how else one might have wrestled with the problems which he faced in his day. Who can say that any would have done better? The fact is though, that we really cannot see the way ahead even in our day if we do not somehow resolve the issues which he

faced. In order to lay a foundation for our approach to the infancy narratives, and any other part of the N.T., we need to take up some position in regard to these vital issues. To agree with Bradley at this point, the true historian is not one who naively believes that he has no presuppositions, but the one who is conscious of the ones he has.

Our aim is to show, not how Kähler may be refuted, but how it seems he may have been misunderstood. Further, our purpose is to show that certain errors on his part have been enlarged upon so that the final result is something vastly different from his beginning. Ernst Käsemann believes that Bultmann has merely '*given preciseness*' to the thesis of Kähler's book. This is just the question. Has he given preciseness to it or has he distorted it?

Kähler wrote when the '*Quest for the Historical Jesus*' had evidently failed. N.T. scholarship had come to a cul-de-sac. He was consciously seeking a new way ahead.<sup>64</sup>

This desire for a new way ahead was framed in a specific context and it is here that we believe the beginning of the misunderstanding is to be found. It is clear from his statements that Kähler's central concern was vitally linked to the area of proclamation, evangelism and faith. His concern was for the common believer, not the scholar, and for the educated but sceptical non-believer, not the critic.<sup>65</sup> A sense of religious scepticism had entered into the heart of the common man, largely due to the fierce conflict between '*enlightened reason*' and '*dogmatic Orthodoxy*.' In such a situation how was a man to be brought to personal, saving faith in Jesus Christ? His question was not '*how may we convince our negative critics to change their theological position*'. His concern was one of Christian apologetics for the purpose of proclamation.

His solution to the problem was, we believe, a powerful apologetic argument which was not new to him and which is not uncommon today. He was able to apply it skilfully to his specific situation. This becomes plain in the final section of his book. It amounts to a spiralling apologetic argument or process of faith which may be stated as follows:

1. How does a man usually come to faith? Kähler is emphatic that it is not through first giving intellectual assent to doctrinal propositions.<sup>66</sup>

Rather, the sequence is first the hearing of the kerygma. This does not lead to '*a sacrifice of the intellect*' because the kerygma he hears is the proclamation of the '*biblical Christ*', who has objective or '*historic*' reality.

2. If the hearer of this word is saturated with rationalistic doubts, a bare minimum of fact about Jesus can be declared to him which has been gained through scientific historical research.<sup>67</sup>

However, as soon as this bare minimum has been established we must take him on to see the biblical Christ, the Christ of the kerygma and the whole bible.

3. The man who thus responds, i.e. to the kerygma (1) and if necessary, to a minimum of historical fact (2) will come to experience the living Christ for himself. It will be impossible for him to grow in the knowledge of this living Christ without growing in his experience of the Bible, which will be the medium through which he discovers the living Christ.<sup>68</sup>

In this process he continually grows in confidence; both in the Bible as the word of God, and in the *'biblical Christ'*. This *'biblical Christ'* is known to him through the whole Bible, where he finds a *'picture'* of a unique figure. So powerful is the impression of this *'picture'* that he becomes convinced that *'Christ himself is the originator of the Biblical picture of the Christ'*.<sup>69</sup> He becomes convinced that behind the Gospels must stand the truly real and historical figure of a unique and indeed divine Saviour. He comes to the *'certainty of faith.'*

4. Now, as a matured Christian, certain of his faith, this man cannot live in isolation from the modern discipline of historical research. He will become aware of the fact that this research often casts doubt upon the substance of his faith. His intellectual honesty will demand that he faces such challenges. He will realize that, as perhaps a theologian, his faith must be able to stand in the midst of the most exacting criticism. This will not threaten him at all. He will be able to open his mind to the critical debate.<sup>70</sup>

5. The matured Christian or theologian will find with his research that historical criticism cannot destroy his faith. He will be able to hold his own in that field. He may now, with the whole church, proclaim the kerygma to the unbeliever and if that unbeliever is saturated with rationalism, he will be able to present a *'bare minimum'* of historical fact to the enquirer which is obtainable through critical research.<sup>71</sup>

It is now possible to explain what we mean by a spiral in Kähler's argument. At this point (5) we have come the full circle. We are back again at the point of proclamation (1-2), although not in the same manner. We are there logically, but this time with the confidence of faith behind us. We are at the same point further up the spiral. It is important for Kähler

that initial saving faith does not need to depend upon the matured historical-critical knowledge at the fourth point. The ordinary Christian has no means to come to that position. To have such knowledge he would have to depend upon the historians. The critical historian would become the high priest of Protestantism. This would be intolerable. Further, the certainty of faith reached at this point cannot depend upon historical-critical research. It depends upon the knowledge of the *'historic, biblical Christ'* reached at the third point. This does not mean that Kähler has no place for critical research at all. At the fourth point he gives it as much space as it requires. In certain circumstances he would even make use of it at the first and second point, in giving a *'bare minimum'* of historical knowledge if that will help to bring a man to Christ.

The misunderstanding and distortion of Kähler's position has arisen because the movement between the third and the fourth points has been handed down without the broader context of the entire apologetic and faith-maturing spiral. This distortion has been made easier due to the fact that Kähler has unfortunately expressed himself in terminology which is in itself erroneous. He has named the historical knowledge at the second point *'scientific history'* (or *Historie*) and the historical knowledge at the fourth point *'salvation-history'* (*Geschichte*). Instead of stating the difference between the knowledge at the second and fourth points as a difference in the maturity of the Christian, he has created two different fields of history.

This systemisation of Kähler's thought could be regarded as a foreign concept which has been read into the *'text'*. Can it be substantiated? The following observations will help to substantiate this analysis.

1. In dialectical theology a complete divorce is made between the *'biblical Christ'*, the *'Christ of faith'*, and the *'historical Christ'*. The former need have no objective historical content. In some theologies the Christ of faith operates as a mere symbol. Only the historical Christ is at all objective in real history. However, very little can be known of him.

If this is the correct understanding of Kähler's position we should find that Kähler's *'historic Biblical Christ'* is similarly without historical content. But this is exactly what we do not find. Repeatedly we find him arguing for the reality and concreteness of the *'biblical Christ'*.<sup>72</sup>



2. In a great deal of dialectical theology there is a complete disregard for historical argument. There is even a delight in the fact that no scientific historical research is required for theological formulation to take place. If this is the correct interpretation of Kähler we should similarly expect him to make no use of historical argument. Yet we find him repeatedly making comments which can only be regarded as historical arguments, i.e. they are arguments in favour of the historicity of the N.T. witness.<sup>73</sup>

The problematical element in Kähler's work is the fact that he refuses to regard such logic as part of historical-critical argumentation. He describes it as '*dogmatic*' or '*theological*' argumentation. This has led to a divorce between what we affirm as theologians and what we affirm as historians. Why was Kähler not able to recognise his historical arguments as part of historical argumentation? The reason for this seems to lie in the image he had of historical-critical method. He was dealing with an obviously positivistic notion of historical research. This becomes plain from his comments on '*analogy*' and '*causality*', which he regarded as elements of '*pragmatism*'.<sup>74</sup> Because his historical arguments were rather distant from this narrow field of pragmatic historiography he preferred to call them '*theological*' or '*dogmatic*.' However, in the definition of historiography found, for instance, in R.G. Collingwood's work, such arguments would be termed historical. They are made up of inferences based upon certain data. It did not, it seems, ever enter into the mind of Kähler that the refusal to term such inferential argumentation '*historical*' would be used as a reason for dispensing with the need for inferential argument itself. This, however, has taken place, and the authority for it is none other than Martin Kähler.

He refused to see his apologetic as part of historical-criticism because he could not accept the way in which the discipline was being used. This becomes plain from his frequent criticisms of the '*so-called*' Christ of historical criticism. By this he did not mean to surrender the field to negative criticism and retreat into subjectivity. His stress upon the subjective certainty of faith was for the benefit of '*ordinary*' Christians. '*After all*' say Carl E. Braaten,

*Kähler called this the so-called historical Jesus, implying merely the rejection of something less than genuine. He would have been horrified to see his thoughts taken over as a way of justifying the detachment of Christology from the real historical existence of the man Jesus of Nazareth, as the Bible portrays him.*<sup>75</sup>

Kähler himself was able to see through the historical-critical method of his day. He knew that it's '*Christ*' was unreal. He knew, too, that a different type of historical method would

vindicate the continuity between the biblical Christ and the historical Christ. But he knew that 'ordinary' Christians would never have his knowledge. He therefore formulated his spiral apologetic. Nevertheless, once the division between *Geschichte* and *Historie* had been made, other theologians, unable to see through the historical-critical method and driven before its onslaught, were given a 'way out'.

The category of *Geschichte* seemed admirably insulated from critical method. In such an impervious realm they could continue to formulate N.T. theology.

To whatever extent the divorce between the *historical Jesus* and the *Christ of faith* can be attributed to Kähler or to the misunderstanding of Kähler, the tendency to make this distinction has become more and more pronounced so that eventually, in the theology of Rudolf Bultmann, all that is required for the historicity of Jesus is the mere *'thatness'* of his existence. The difference between Kähler and Bultmann is that while the former could criticise the historical-critical method of his day, the latter believes it to be completely acceptable in all its ramifications as part of the modern scientific world view. The consistent use of such presuppositions should, as Troeltsch saw so clearly, result in the annihilation of traditional belief. But Kähler's *historic-biblical* Christ has enabled the dialectical school to live in two worlds at the same time.<sup>76</sup>

The following points may be mentioned.

1. Dialectical theology tends to accept the crucifixion as an historical fact (*Historie*) but places the resurrection in the realm of *Geschichte*. This drives the crucifixion and the resurrection into two realms. This leads to an insuperable problem because in the N. T. the resurrection is regarded as the validation of the cross. In this way the very fabric of N.T. theology is disintegrated.<sup>77</sup>
2. The act of God in Jesus Christ is the centre and basis of Christian theology. This is a firm belief of dialectical theology. But this theology also believes that faith does not depend upon the historical Jesus. How then can Jesus be the basis of faith in one sense (*Geschichte*) but not be the basis of faith as an historical figure (*Historie*)? Does this not amount to a denial of the Incarnation?<sup>78</sup>
3. Existentialist historiography makes a radical separation between faith and scientific history. Meaning exists in the realm of faith but cannot be deduced from brute facts

of history. But if the facts themselves are dumb, does this not mean that one can have meaning without facts at all? Can one not have a kerygma without history at all? If so, why is the N.T. revelation still held to as the basis of faith? <sup>79</sup>

4. The dichotomy between *Historie* and *Geschichte* is supported by the reformed principle of justification through faith alone. Works, the law, the flesh, and human wisdom are equated with scientific history from which man must be liberated. But then what do we have faith in? If the object of faith is evacuated of historical content does one not arrive at a point where faith becomes its own justification and object? <sup>80</sup>

This is perhaps a fitting place to mention the so-called '*New Quest for the historical Jesus*'. In our initial definition of the problem we mentioned three possible solutions. The '*New Quest*' was not mentioned as another option. The reason for this will now become apparent. Despite the fact that various post-Bultmannian scholars have seen many of the problems attached to dialectical theology, it does not seem that their attempt constitutes a new departure. They have criticised the '*Old Quest*' on three basic issues. Firstly, the '*Old Quest*' was marred by a positivistic reliance on unbiased '*facts*'. It is now generally assumed that such history is not possible. Secondly, there was an unbalanced belief in scientism. Historians, in an attempt to keep up with the natural sciences, compromised the unique character of their discipline and, as a result, produced a '*scissors and paste*' type of history. Thirdly, the '*Old Quest*' made the vital mistake of regarding the Gospels as historical sources rather than kerygmatic proclaimers of the faith. Their attempt to write biographies of Jesus failed miserably. Overagainst such a view of history they have made use of the new understanding of history common to Martin Heidegger and R.G. Collingwood. An attempt is now made to understand Jesus existentially. Emphasis is now laid upon Jesus' own understanding of existence. This understanding is then said to be the basis of the understanding found in the kerygma and hence the continuity can be discovered between the historical Jesus and the kerygma. <sup>81</sup>

Two criticisms may be levelled at such an attempt. Firstly, it is difficult to understand how Christ's own understanding of his existence can in any way be less open to subjective interpretation than his '*psychological development*', which was the consuming interest of the '*Old Quest*'. Of all the elements in the Gospel tradition, surely this one is more difficult to ascertain than any other. Secondly, the post-Bultmannian scholars have left the fundamental principles of nineteenth century historiography untouched. Both the principle of analogy and the principle of criticism have been taken over without question. Nature and history are still regarded as a closed system of cause and effect. There is therefore absolutely no likeli-

hood of this method coming to an objective estimation of the historical Jesus. He will of necessity have to be moulded by some criterion outside of the tradition, and it seems a foregone conclusion that, instead of a nineteenth century liberal gentleman, he will appear as a twentieth century existentialist theologian.

To bring this section to a conclusion, our investigation leads us to believe that it is impossible to have a peaceful co-existence between the historical-critical method, as defined in the nineteenth century, and traditional Christian faith. Dialectical theology, in so far as it is an attempt to escape from a confrontation between the two, fails to answer the real questions. This leads us to the third possibility, namely a critical analysis and redefinition of the historical-critical method itself.

## THE NEW THEOLOGY OF THE RESURRECTION AND THE RE-DEFINITION OF THE HISTORICAL CRITICAL METHOD

### Richard R. Niebuhr. Resurrection and Historical Reason

Niebuhr wrestles in particular with the philosophy of Kant, which he believes is largely responsible for the problems in modern historiography. He proposes that in addition to a '*Critique of pure reason*' and a '*Critique of practical reason*', a '*Critique of historical research*' is required. Historiography is constantly being absorbed into either the categories of classical, syllogistic logic or the methods of verification used in the natural sciences. This overlooks the uniqueness of the historical discipline.<sup>82</sup> His contribution to a '*Critique of historical research*' may be divided into three areas; firstly the relationship between subject and object in historical research, secondly the relationship between historical reason and one's view of nature, and thirdly what he terms the power of the past.

#### 1. Subject and object in historical research

There is no such thing as neutral history, or history in general. History is always appropriated to the present by a particular group, and such a group will always select a particular part of the past to remember. In this regard, Niebuhr makes three points:

Firstly, the resurrection would not exist as part of the past but for the memory of the church which remembers him.<sup>83</sup>

Secondly, '*the mode of historical cognition is remembering.*' This means that no fact of the past must be reduced to the present. Only by being allowed to remain in the past of our memory can history remain truly objective. However this raises the danger that the church is allowed to become a '*suprapersonal entity with a collective consciousness*' that creates its own memory.<sup>84</sup>

Thirdly, in answer to this danger is the fact that historical memory is always corporate. The community is therefore always in dialogue with itself in regard to its memory and consequently criticism of that memory is always taking place.<sup>85</sup>

## 2. Nature and historical reason<sup>86</sup>

Modern theology is unable to accept the historicity of the resurrection due to its understanding of law and causality in the process of history. Niebuhr questions this assumption on two counts. Firstly, this assumption comes from confusing the areas of history and nature. Nature is regarded as a causal network and so history is assumed to be subject to the same causal network. This is disputable. Secondly, it is debatable whether nature itself can be defined as a closed network of causality. Niebuhr goes into some detail in connection with the two related concepts of law and causality. Due to various philosophical influences, a process of thought has taken place which may be termed the '*naturalisation of history*'. By this, Niebuhr means that history has been incorrectly reduced to various concepts of nature which in themselves are not without difficulties.<sup>87</sup> In answer to this process he points out that precisely the opposite process has taken place. This he terms the '*historicism of nature*'. As various thinkers have put it '*nature*' may only be a habit of mind, the concept of nature itself has a history and may therefore be subject to history, and in connection with the laws of nature it can be maintained that the concept of law is also subject to change.<sup>88</sup>

There is no need to bring these two views of nature (i.e. naturalisation of history and the historicism of nature) to a final conclusion. What does become clear is that one need not understand either nature or history in terms of unbroken causality. This means that an escape into idealistic views of history such as *Heilsgeschichte* is equally unnecessary.<sup>89</sup>

## 3. The Power of the Past<sup>90</sup>

Albert Schweitzer is to be recommended because he recognised the power of the past. He saw that one cannot take Jesus out of the first century and separate the Christian kernel from the Jewish-apocalyptic husk. This indicates his respect for the stuff of history. But Schweitzer then went on to shatter his own principle by using a modern psychological approach to explain the resurrection.

Schweitzer's use of an arbitrary principle of interpreting the N.T. indicates a particular vice which must be avoided at all costs; that is, of making the past subservient to the present. In this way, we lose what is novel in the past, we use an arbitrary principle which we bring from outside the N.T., and our conclusions become fictitious because they are based upon a principle of reduction. Against this, Niebuhr maintains that the past cannot be satisfactorily reduced to anything else, including the present. This is shown by the fact that, with all the interpretations of Jesus which have been given in the past, this area of history maintains its own independence. It is notable that we are always driven back to just this past; and the continual re-interpretation does not eradicate the memory symbols which lie at the root of the Christian traditions. The past therefore always transcends the present. *'The spirit of the past blows where it wishes'*. It has a power of its own which affects the present. We cannot escape from the claims which the past makes upon us, particularly the past of the Historical Jesus. <sup>91</sup>

If we may comment on Niebuhr's views on historical reason, one serious weakness presents itself. His emphasis on the indissolubility of the historical Jesus and the church which interpreted him is valuable. The weakness of his emphasis is that the knowledge of the historical Jesus is confined to the observer who stands within the church. Niebuhr notes that Western thought is dependent upon two traditions, the Hebrew and the Hellenistic. This gives the modern interpreter the feeling that he can stand outside the church and interpret Jesus by the use of some criterion which is external to the tradition. He states that,

*neither psychology, nor idealogy, nor the natural sciences are capable of furnishing the criterion of historicity. And, when the historian does use one or more of these sciences in this illegitimate way, the picture of the past he reconstructs has no more than a specious certainty.* <sup>92</sup>

It seems that, in Niebuhr's view, the illegitimacy of such an attempt is the stance of the historian outside the church. Firstly, does this not amount to a circular argument? To believe in the historical Jesus is a necessary presumption for discovering the historical Jesus at all. Secondly, does this not remove any common ground between the church and secular thought? Thirdly, does this not remove the public nature of historical truth, i.e., that any historical inference must be open to verification or falsification by any other critical analysis? This problem hampers Niebuhr's otherwise important and positive contribution to the

*New Theology of the Resurrection*'. This is a fitting point to move on to the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg, because one of his emphases is precisely the common ground between the believer and the non-believer in the investigation of the historicity of the resurrection. His view ably compensates for the weakness of Niebuhr's contribution.

### Wolfhart Pannenberg

For convenience we will deal with Pannenberg's theology under three topics; the relationship of historical method to the philosophy of science, the proper use of the historical method and the revelation of God through history in Jesus of Nazareth.

#### 1. Historical method and the philosophy of science

The value of Pannenberg's theology is shown in this area because he has attempted to bring to an end the isolation of theological method from the methods of secular science in general. The dialectical period was a reaction to the inroads which scientific method had made into traditional faith. In reacting it actually attempted to escape from the problem into a 'sacred' area where it was protected from the threat of secular encroachments. This method was at first enthusiastically accepted because it did give some 'way-out' for theology. However it soon became apparent that this 'way out' presented problems of its own. On the one hand it destroyed any possible common ground between the church and the non-believer, and on the other hand it raised the question of whether the so-called 'truth' which was proclaimed in this 'sacred' and protected area could be truth at all if it was not open to general verification. Pannenberg has attempted to bring theology out of its retreatist position in his recent work, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, in which he attempts to define a common criterion of truth which can be used in all the sciences - and in theology as well. Since the Christian faith is so dependent upon history, this amounts to a discussion of historical method in relation to scientific method. Pannenberg's contention is that a basic unity of scientific method for all disciplines is only possible if we move away from positivism in the direction of 'critical rationalism'.<sup>93</sup>

The most radical cleavage between science and theology was evident in the philosophy of logical positivism. Pannenberg indicates how the validity of theological statements has been denied by this school with its criterion of verification.<sup>94</sup> He then shows how this criterion has itself been subject to criticism, mainly by Karl Popper, and how the principle of verification has been replaced by the criterion of falsification. But even here the validity of

theological statements has been denied.<sup>95</sup>

He therefore gives reasons for rejecting the principle of falsification, especially when narrowly defined.<sup>96</sup> In history and in a court of law, neither the principle of verification or falsification is applicable. Proof operates rather with the balance of the evidence. A contingent sequence of events can only be weighed up on the evidence. The only thing that is repeatable is the logical structure of the historical reconstruction. Does this mean that science and history must now be separated into two unrelated areas of enquiry? He denies this as well, and gives reasons for holding that both science and history (and therefore the historical arguments which form the basis of Christian theology) operate with a form of verification which is rather more flexible than the various criteria which are often supposed to be used in these disciplines.<sup>97</sup>

The significance of Pannenberg's position may be clarified by the following observations:

- a) By relating theological, historical and scientific methods in this way, Pannenberg has shown that a unified criterion of truth is possible. This can be used in all scientific research (scientific in the broader sense). This means that theology need not seek to escape into a so-called '*independent method*'.
- b) It is improper to subject historical method to a rigid criterion of law. It is not necessary to limit history to a study of the typical, to the exclusion of the particular. Such a method is not even applicable to science in the strictest sense.
- c) In the light of the two observations made above, it becomes clear that it is unnecessary for theology to postulate a special realm of Heilsgeschichte which is protected from the destructive effects of scientific method. Theological statements may not be judged as meaningless, and theology, because it seeks its basis in history, is able to use a method which is open to scientific verification, provided that by '*verification*' we do not refer to the narrow concept of logical positivism. Biblical theology need no longer operate with an artificial distinction between '*fact*' and '*meaning*'.

## 2. The Historical method

Pannenberg's historical method must be seen against the background of his philosophy of history, which in turn is intimately connected with the way he believes God is able to reveal himself to man. We will outline his thinking in this area in point form.



1. The link between the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as a particular historical figure and the world in general is through the pre-history of Jesus in the history of Israel, which history is in turn linked to universal history through the study of the history of religions. <sup>98</sup>
2. Since God is the Lord of the whole of reality, and since reality is revealed in history, God can only truly reveal himself through universal history, through the whole of history. A concept of universal history is indispensable for historiography. <sup>99</sup>
3. The idea of world history or universal history, and in particular the linear view of history, has its roots in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. This basis cannot and must not be removed. <sup>100</sup>
4. The linear view of history, together with the prophetic and later the apocalyptic hope, led to the understanding that only at the end of history can God fully reveal himself. <sup>101</sup>
5. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, an event took place which was only possible at the end of history. The end was proleptically revealed in Jesus. God is therefore truly revealed in Jesus. <sup>102</sup>
6. The resurrection of Jesus is not to be regarded as a particular, isolated miraculous event. It occurred in the context of the O.T. apocalyptic and eschatological hope.
7. The O. T. witness to the history of Israel need not be rejected as a biased and uncritical view of its own history. This is possible if one understands the O.T. witness with the aid of a correct critical method, namely the history of the transmission of traditions. With this method critical history and kerygmatic history are no longer divided. <sup>103</sup>
8. O.T. history may be regarded as valid history provided the principle of analogy is properly defined and provided it is interpreted in the light of the resurrection as an eschatological event. <sup>104</sup>
9. The resurrection, when understood against the background of the O.T. eschato-

social hope is an event which carries its own interpretation. It is not only accessible to faith. This means that a dichotomy between fact and meaning is no longer necessary.<sup>105</sup>

10. This in turn means that faith and reason must not be placed in antithesis. The fact of the resurrection is accessible to the non-believer because its meaning is public. Faith is therefore based upon critical history, although the eschatological tension produced by the proleptic nature of the fulfilment in Jesus Christ means that an element of risk must always be involved in this faith.<sup>106</sup>

3. The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth. The Resurrection as the ground of His unity with God.

In most dogmatic formulations of theology, the divinity of Christ is based upon His claims to authority prior to Easter. Such a view is unacceptable to Pannenberg. In his view, the claims of Christ brought with them a sense of ambiguity. Jesus claimed that the awaited eschaton was already present in his ministry. God's reign was near at hand. The people had only to repent. The reign of God became such an overwhelming consideration that adherence to the law became a relative matter.

However, the eschaton was not yet fully evident. This meant that Christ's claims called out for vindication, and without that vindication they cannot be the basis of faith. Christ's journey to Jerusalem must be regarded as a conscious attempt to force the people to a decision about his claims. This journey, Jesus must have known, could have led to His death. But he undertook the journey in the knowledge that he would be vindicated by God in the imminent coming of the kingdom. Both he and his disciples must have understood this event to include the general, rather than the individual, resurrection of the dead. Thus, when Jesus was raised, it indicated that the end had already occurred. Pannenberg gives six conclusions which must be regarded as part of the meaning of Christ's resurrection.<sup>107</sup>

Having worked out the theological implications of the resurrection, he then deals with the acceptability of such an event to modern man.<sup>108</sup>

At this point it needs to be mentioned that in his view, the Jewish eschatological understanding of history is the very basis of Christ's claim to authority and the vindication of that claim. It is therefore impossible to accept the Christian faith without this view of history.

Having cleared the way in terms of our pre-understanding of the concept of resurrection itself, Pannenberg then approaches the historicity of the N.T. tradition. This leads him to a positive assessment of the historicity of the resurrection.<sup>109</sup>

Pannenberg's contribution to historical method in relation to the N.T. is helpful in the following ways:

1. The form of historical dualism which has plagued N.T. research during the dialectical period has been successfully dealt with. This has been done in two ways.

Firstly, a correct understanding of scientific method removes the reason for a special area of *Heilsgeschichte* for theology. Secondly, the method which has been described as the history of the transmission of traditions fuses together critical and kerygmatic (or interpreted) history. In this way, a methodological principle is used which removes the possibility of such an historical dualism developing.

2. We noted that the essential weakness in Richard Niebuhr's theology is its tendency to restrict knowledge of the historical Jesus to those who stand within the tradition of the Church. Pannenberg's historiography bridges the gap between the proclamation of the church and secular man. It does this in four ways. Firstly, Christian theology is shown to operate with essentially the same method and the same criterion of truth as that which is applicable to the formulation of scientific hypotheses. Secondly, the study of the history of religions operates as a bridge between the secular study of religion and the Judaeo-Christian revelation. Thirdly, the acceptability of the historical fact of the resurrection is assisted by a pre-understanding of the phenomenon which is demonstrable in terms of modern anthropology. Fourthly, the public nature of God's revelation in secular history means that the basis of the Christian faith is open to public verification.

3. The apologetic force of Pannenberg's theology is evident from the method of his argument. Scientific hypotheses are forged through an interrelation of data and hypothesis where neither pure induction nor pure deduction are used. Similarly, Pannenberg relates together the data of history with the hypothesis of a particular philosophy of history and the hypothesis of the historicity of Christ's resurrection. As in scientific method, his argument is spiral. His philosophy of history opens the way for his understanding of the resurrection. His understanding of the resurrection is grounded upon his view of the history of the transmis-

sion of Israel's faith. This faith is the basis of the apocalyptic and eschatological view of history, which in turn is the basis of Pannenberg's philosophy of history. There is therefore a continual interrelation between data and hypothesis which grows into an apologetic spiral.

4. The improper use of the historical-critical method, which plagued the '*Quest for the historical Jesus*', and which still continues to plague the '*New Quest for the historical Jesus*', has been dealt with in Pannenberg's redefinition of the principle of analogy and the principle of correlation.
5. The eschatological view of history, which lies at the basis of the Biblical revelation, has for the first time in modern theology been expanded into a general philosophy of history. The '*Quest for the historical Jesus*' came to its termination when Albert Schweitzer rejected this view of history as part of an outmoded and mythical world view. Pannenberg's reinstatement of this view of history in modern thinking therefore breaks through the cul-de-sac which prevented the '*Quest*' from progressing any further.

#### John Warwick Montgomery

The relationship between John Montgomery and Wolfhart Pannenberg is significant. Montgomery is clearly aware of Pannenberg's theology, and notes some of his beliefs with approval. However, his own theology is original. He differs from Pannenberg on major issues and the structure of his theology is entirely different. Yet, despite the evident fact that both scholars have formulated their thinking independently from each other, there are striking similarities. It would not be too much to say that Montgomery represents in Anglo-American '*conservative evangelicalism*' substantially what Pannenberg represents in post-Bultmannian and post-Barthian Germanic theology. The broad outlines of the '*New theology of the resurrection*' are therefore not limited to a single thinker but are developing spontaneously in widely divergent traditions. This adds weight to this theological position.

We shall deal with Montgomery's thoughts under five topics:

1. The relationship between scientific and theological method - induction and deduction.
2. History: Public or private?

3. A critique of
    - (a) Secular philosophies of history.
    - (b) Dialectical theologies of history.
    - (c) 'Orthodox' Conservative Calvinism and history.
  4. The Resurrection and Christian apologetics.
  5. A Christian philosophy of history.
1. The relationship between scientific and theological method.

We saw with Pannenberg's analysis of scientific method that this area cannot be separated from the insights of modern philosophy. The philosophy of science and philosophy *per se* have become closely related in recent thought. Montgomery's understanding of both scientific and theological method is similarly linked to his view of analytical philosophy first advocated by Ludwig Wittgenstein of the '*Vienna school*'. His approach is rather different from Pannenberg. While the latter basically rejects the verification principle, Montgomery baptises it into his own apologetics. He believes that A.J. Ayer has answered the objections against this principle and feels it is particularly useful in dealing with the metaphysical dualism in the tradition of Plato, Hegel and Kant, and in the resultant historical dualism which distinguishes between *Historie* and *Geschichte*. It is equally helpful in dealing with the '*meaningless*' '*being*' statements found in existential thinking.<sup>110</sup>

This leads Montgomery to his belief that, in all claims to truth, the empirical method is indispensable and is superior to all others. This applies equally to historical and theological truth claims.<sup>111</sup>

His definition of empirical method is basically in agreement with Pannenberg.<sup>112</sup> Scientific method does not operate with pure induction or with deduction, but with an interrelation between the two which may be termed '*abduction*' or '*retroduction*.'<sup>113</sup> When scientific method is so defined Montgomery is quite certain that it is no different from correct theological method. In this regard he insists that Christian theology should begin with an empirical historical approach to the biblical documents, and in particular the N.T. documents, studied as any other documents.<sup>114</sup> This raises the question of whether empirical history is really possible. Here, like Pannenberg, Montgomery is emphatic that history is public and not private, and that God's revelation in history is not limited to those who approach it with faith, but is open for public verification. This, it would seem, is the distinctive feature of Montgomery's historiography.

## 2. History; Public or Private?

In discussing it, Paul D. Feinberg entitles his article *'History: Public or Private? A Defence of John Warwick Montgomery's Philosophy of History.'*

As Paul Feinberg adheres to Montgomery's school of thought we will mention his summary of the position. <sup>115</sup>

Firstly, Montgomery believes that it is possible to write objective history. He defines this not in the sense that the historian is without value judgments, but in the sense that his systematic reconstruction is exposed to criticism. <sup>116</sup>

Secondly, he believes that the facts of history carry their own meaning. By this he does not mean that the historian becomes a passive observer but that *'the facts in themselves provide adequate criterion for choosing among the variant interpretations of them'*. <sup>117</sup>

Thirdly, he holds that the alternative to this view of history must inevitably lead to historical scepticism, and that this in turn implies solipscism. <sup>118</sup>

## 3. a) A Critique of Secular Philosophies of History.

Here we shall be extremely brief, although Montgomery goes to some length on the subject. He gives a history of the philosophy of History from the classical past and the Biblical tradition, through the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and up to the present day, culminating in an examination of various theologies of history. Throughout his investigation he asks four basic questions: firstly, what goals do historians set for history? Secondly, what judgments do they make about history? Thirdly, with what view of human nature do they operate? And fourthly, what ethical principles are involved in their interpretation of history? His conclusion is as follows;

*Firstly, the goals they set for history cannot be demonstrated to have a necessitarian character about them. Secondly, in choosing their respective goals, the secular philosophers of history continually make judgements as to what is significant and what is valuable, but in no case are they able to justify these value judgments in absolute terms. Thirdly, the secular philosophers of history always enter upon their work with an unjustified, unprovable concept of human nature.*

*Fourthly, these philosophers gratuitously presuppose ethical principles.*<sup>119</sup>

b) A critique of Dialectical Philosophies of History

We shall here again select one aspect of Montgomery's thought. He does in fact analyse a number of theologians (Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Rudolf Bultmann, Reinhold Niebuhr, Anders Nygren, Paul Tillich) who may broadly be categorised under neo-orthodoxy. We shall mention his comments of Paul Tillich and Karl Barth only. Tillich cannot properly be termed '*dialectical*' but in the broader sense, the view of history amongst these theologians is much the same.

Paul Tillich<sup>120</sup>

Firstly, in the area of Tillich's theology, Montgomery criticises his dichotomy between '*Being*' and the phenomenal world. This dichotomy leaves Tillich with Lessings problem regarding historical certainty.<sup>121</sup> Secondly, Tillich has absolutised the protestant principle of justification.<sup>122</sup> This leads to serious problems in his thought. Having used justification as an absolute criterion he has failed to use it on his concept of '*Being*'. Tillich's definition of this principle, if used consistently, would evacuate his concept of '*Being*' of all content.<sup>123</sup> Fundamentally Tillich's concept of '*Being*', which caused him to reject the source of revelation in the historical, phenomenal world, falls to the ground when confronted with the verification principle.<sup>124</sup>

Karl Barth<sup>125</sup>

Two fundamental criticisms are levelled at Barth. Firstly, Barth in his reaction to nineteenth century optimism has defined secular history as '*all conquering monotony*'. His view of sinful human history is entirely negative. This is manifested in his refusal to allow for any form of '*natural revelation*', and in his full attention being focussed exclusively on the Christ-event, to the exclusion of any meaning in general human history.<sup>126</sup> Secondly, Barth, in line with post-Kantian philosophy, has divided history into two realms, so that redemptive history is divorced from secular history.<sup>127</sup> However, he has retreated to a position where he cannot possibly meet the unbeliever on his ground. He has to treat the non-Christian as a Christian and the non-believer as a believer. He has removed the Christian faith from criticism, but at the cost of denying the Incarnation.

c) A Critique of an 'Orthodox Calvinist' Theology of History

His criticism in this case is directed against Gordon H. Clark.<sup>128</sup> Clark's basic argument depends upon the use of the idea of relativity in all epistemology. He believes that empirical history is inherently impossible. The historian must inevitably select some of the facts. In doing so, he will use a principle of selection not found in the facts themselves, and the principle he begins with will determine the results he ends with.<sup>129</sup> All is subjective, and all 'facts' are distorted. There are no historical facts which are not distorted by the human subject. Clark believes the answer lies in one undistorted object: Holy Scripture. This then becomes the criterion for judging between what is distorted and what is not distorted, and hence objective knowledge becomes possible.

Montgomery replies to such a position as follows;

*Whenever the Bible forms a link in an epistemological chain, the sensory contact with the Bible must form the very next link. Why? Because the Bible is a sensory object and can only be met in the world of sensory, synthetic experience.*

Further,

*the Bible is an historical object, and can only be met if we take objective history seriously. How, for example, do we know what constitutes the Bible? Only by examining the historical evidences for the genuine canonicity of the biblical books. If these evidences are ex hypotheses, "crooked" if we cannot trust historical method in determining them — then perforce we cannot be sure we have a revelation at all.<sup>130</sup>*

Montgomery therefore totally rejects an a priori presuppositional approach to history and theology. This leads to his belief that a Christian apologetic must begin with only the heuristic presuppositions proper to empirical method, approach the N.T. documents as any other secular documents, and then inductively demonstrate the divinity of Christ. It is at this point that the resurrection becomes the fulcrum of his whole position.

#### 4. The Resurrection and Christian Apologetics

*It is the conviction of the present writer that the Christian world-view is in fact "accessible to science" and rests upon an objective foundation which will stand up under the most exacting criticism...It rests, as the apostles well knew, on the objective, historical truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.<sup>131</sup>*



His argument is stated in six points.<sup>132</sup> We will draw attention to certain elements in his apologetic which are significant for our argument. His first principle is significant for a number of reasons.

Firstly, he assumes that empirical method must make a minimal number of heuristic presuppositions. Such assumptions must be distinguished from rationalistic and historicistic presuppositions which are often used in N.T. research. Secondly, it must be assumed that objective history is possible. We have already noted his arguments in this area. Thirdly, the attempt to 'get behind' the Gospels and work back to the 'original Jesus' through form-critical analysis is unacceptable. Montgomery bases this view upon his study of similar methods in the classics which have now been completely discounted. Fourthly, the implicit interest in the historical origins of the Christian faith is based upon the fact that only this faith offers objective historical verification for its truth claim. Having rejected historicistic approaches to history, Montgomery believes that the position of F.F. Bruce regarding the historicity of the N.T. documents must be accepted.

Regarding his second point, it should be noted that like Pannenberg, Montgomery does not base his argument for the divinity of Christ upon his pre-Easter claim to authority. His claims rest upon the forthcoming resurrection. This distinguishes both these scholars from the traditional approach where Christology is based upon the Incarnation. The specific characteristic of what we have termed the 'New Theology of the Resurrection' is the fact that the resurrection becomes the starting point upon which every thing else rests.

In connection with his third principle, it should be noted that his position does not amount to a 'proof' of the resurrection. He says;

*the weight of historical evidence requires us to admit the truth of the Resurrection; probability which...is the criterion of truth of the historian, must rule over any apriori consideration, in the making of historical judgment.*

*Paul Tillich is quite right when he says with reference to the resurrection: "Historical research can never give more than a probable answer"; he is wrong, however, when he concludes from this that the historical argument is inadequate.*

The historical argument for the resurrection can never 'force' a non-believer into faith. It is intended rather 'to give solid objective ground for testing the Christian faith experientially.' This test is then made by 'confronting' the 'Christ of the Scriptures'. *'The Scriptural Gospel is ultimately self-attesting'*.<sup>133</sup>

We should comment here that Montgomery's position is therefore not far from dialectical theology in the sense that ultimately the truth-claim of the Christian faith is proved through 'confrontation'. The vital difference is that such a confrontation begins with an objective, verifiable basis which is accessible through the historical-critical method. Further, it is noticeable that his position also has similarities with that of Martin Kähler in the sense that the enquirer must confront the 'Christ of the Scriptures' and not the Christ of historicistic criticism. That which is determined by historical criticism is the fact of his pre-Easter claim to divinity and the historicity of his resurrection. Subsequent to that, *'faith comes by hearing, and hearing the Word of God.'* The event of the proclamation of the kerygma is therefore given a large place, as in dialectical theology. Again the vital difference is that this proclamation does not occur in a historical-critical vacuum, but is undergirded by an historical-critical argument.

With regard to his fifth point, we should note two things. Firstly, Montgomery differs from Pannenberg in working out the immediate implications of the resurrection. Where Pannenberg is motivated by his essentially eschatological philosophy of history, Montgomery is concerned to discover objective criteria for the establishment of a philosophy of history. Secondly, Montgomery's view of the inspiration of the scriptures is inductive, as opposed to traditional orthodoxy where the inerrancy of scripture is either an assumption (as with Gordon Clark), or where it is based upon a circular argument, in the sense that inspiration is proved from the statements of scripture about its own inspiration. Montgomery's approach is not circular.<sup>134</sup>

## 5. A Christian Philosophy of History

His philosophy of history follows directly from his apologetic argument. This argument hinges on the resurrection. His philosophy of history can therefore be said to rest on the resurrection. It embraces the areas of metaphysics, ethics, anthropology, and redemption.<sup>135</sup>

It differs from Pannenberg's theology of the resurrection in that while Pannenberg works out the implications of the resurrection in terms of Christology, Montgomery works out the implications of the resurrection in terms of a Christian philosophy of history. These two views are, however, to be regarded as complementary rather than contradictory.

We are now finally in a position to relate our historiography to the investigation of the infancy narratives, and make some concluding remarks.

### Conclusion.

Firstly, it must be stated that the *New Theology of the Resurrection*, which we have considered to be the best approach to the issues confronting us in regard to the historical-critical method, and the basis of Christian faith, is not at this point to be taken as an absolute presupposition. It must not become an absolute principle of historical research. Rather it has been examined to show what may be a valid approach to the remainder of the N.T. documents. Thus the tendency to adopt a rationalistic presupposition, or a definition of history which prevents the acceptance of unique events, is balanced with the demonstration of the fact that exactly the opposite view may well be correct. We may illustrate our point with Harvey's analysis of an historical argument. He says;

*there is a sense in which the historian must acknowledge the consensus that has been formed by the prior work of others in his field, especially if this consensus has been influenced by a great historical writer...By virtue of their exhaustive work, certain presumptions have been established and these presumptions cast something like the "burden of proof" of legal argument on those who would establish a different thesis. The burden alters the dynamics of argument in subtle ways, conveying a certain weight to this or that argument and, lends special importance to this or that rebuttal.* <sup>136</sup>

Harvey shows here that presumptions are not the very material of historical argument. The argument itself deals with the material of history. However, presumptions can tip the scales in a certain direction. What he applies to the consensus of great scholars in the past can equally be applied to historiographical and methodological presuppositions. They cannot be used as part of the argument itself but may be used as warrants or rebuttals. The historian must attempt to be as self-conscious as possible about his presuppositions and must attempt to prevent them from exercising a prominent role in his argument. He must seek to find in the data themselves the support for his position. However, he may arrive at a point in his argument where the use of a presupposition of one kind will decisively influence his argument in a certain direction, and a presupposition of another kind may decisively influence his argument in another direction. Here he must be careful not to camou-

flage his use of such a presupposition. He must not come to his conclusion and give the impression that the data alone have led him to his conclusion. In dealing with the infancy narratives an attempt will be made to state the conclusions that would follow from the use of various presuppositions, and in most cases where the data themselves cannot conclusively demand a certain conclusion the issue will be left open.

Secondly, comment must be made on the view of scripture adopted in this work. On the one hand we have the critical approach where the biblical documents must be viewed as any other secular document. On the other hand scholars in the conservative tradition who may for instance base their view of inspiration of Montgomery's '*inductive inerrancy*' approach will find it difficult to view the documents as any other book. Are these two approaches mutually exclusive? Our answer here is positively no. The conservative scholar in pursuing his '*critical*' work must lay aside his view of inspiration and face all the problems that may arise. However, the time may come when the data themselves are not able to conclusively prove that the scriptures are in error but where the presence of an error at least becomes a good possibility. In such a case a scholar with a tendency to rationalistic presuppositions will conclude that '*there is an error*'.

The conservative scholar will conclude '*there may be an error*' in his critical argument. He may then go on and say that in his personal belief '*there is no error*'. Up to a certain point scholars with widely differing positions may quite happily travel together. However, at a critical stage there may come a point of departure where their differing presupposition will lead to antithetical conclusions. Before the point of departure the argument was criticisable, for any scholar. After that point the argument retreated into the area of presupposition, either on the rationalistic or on the conservative side of the scales. The test of any position is its ability to include as few cases beyond the point of departure as possible. For instance the historiographical presuppositions of D.F. Strauss are unacceptable to many scholars, based as they are upon idealistic philosophy. The great weakness of Strauss' position is that despite his great clarity of thought in many areas, his general position is weighed down with so many arguments that go beyond the point of departure. This means that those who do not share his world-view quickly begin to lose all confidence in his scholarship. Such problems must be avoided as far as possible.

Thirdly, our conclusion is that the divorce between historical fact and theological meaning is untenable. In the case of many investigations of the infancy narratives it is stated that the '*facts*' are without historical foundation but that nevertheless a vital meaning or symbol of faith remains. This would be an acceptable position if the documents purported to be merely symbolical representations of truth. However, if the documents, for instance Luke's

Gospel, purport to be a reliable witness to historical events, and if it can be shown decisively that the so-called events are without substance, then they can have no great meaning for theology. In the documents themselves the meaning is supposed to rest in the significance of the facts. It is therefore impossible to accept the witness of the documents in any normative sense if the so-called facts are without substance, and consequently no theology can be based upon such witnesses.

Fourthly, we have rejected the idea that history can be written without value judgments. Every historian must have his *'point of view'*. The fact that he finds certain facts more significant than others does not in itself mean that he has distorted history. He may have merely told the story from his point of view. The reliability of his writing must be judged on other grounds. If, however, it can be shown that he has a tendency to distort the facts to fit his point of view then his witness loses its credibility. The Gospels were written from a position of faith in order to inspire faith. This does not in itself mean that they have distorted the events. It may mean that, but such an eventuality must become evident from the critical investigation itself.

Lastly, we wish to suggest that even with Pannenberg's re-formulation of the principle of analogy, the situation is not entirely satisfactory. If the possibility exists that a man was raised from the dead and demonstrated an order of existence beyond the grave, one cannot escape the implications of such a fact in terms of a *'world'* of *'spiritual'* reality which transcends the purely materialistic realm. As an historian one need not commit oneself to belief in such a realm, but neither may one shut one's mind to the very real possibility of such a realm. Further, mention is often made of the beliefs of *'modern man'* in the scientific era. This is usually said to imply belief in a *'closed system'*. We have already noted that such a view is open to the charge of being obsolete because it operates with a nineteenth century view of science. But we may now pursue this train of thought a little further. What exactly are the beliefs of *'modern man'* in the scientific era? We cannot at this point launch into a detailed discussion of modern beliefs in general. However, it is far from certain that modern man still operates with a *'closed world'* when it comes to *'spiritual'* realms. The indications are that modern man is becoming more openly mystical. Even in the modern discipline of psychology, research is opening the possibility of realms which cannot be accounted for in normal categories. Montgomery has done a considerable amount of research into parapsychology, modern occultism, and phenomena such as demon possession.<sup>137</sup> We refer especially to the symposium of doctors, psychiatrists, scientists and theologians which he has edited in a recent volume.<sup>138</sup> Not only are we confronted with the para-normal in modern occultism and modern psychology, but the Christian church is evidencing an experience of

the '*charismatic*' which is reminiscent of the descriptions of such phenomena in the N.T. Such phenomena are especially persistent and especially unequivocal in certain areas where the church is confronting primitive religions and primitive societies, (for instance in Latin America, Indonesia and Korea). It will not do to say that modern man regards all such phenomena which are related in the N.T. as legendary descriptions of non-historical events. This is simply not the case. Neither is it acceptable to create a schizophrenic division between what we believe as historians and what we believe as Christians, for belief in such an '*open world*' is not limited to religious people. Does this mean then that we have no criteria for rejecting folk-lore and fantasy in historical traditions? The answer to this must be clearly no. Here is where the principle of analogy must be extended in the positive sense regarding the non-material realm. Herbert Bradley was quite correct when he stated that the criterion which the historian uses is determined by his '*world*'. What we must now affirm is that the '*world*' in the twentieth century is rather different from the world of the nineteenth century, and that the present '*world*' of modern man is open to any verifiable phenomenon. We must therefore judge between fact and fantasy in the modern world. Phenomena which are well attested in the modern world - whether they be the experience of parapsychologists, occultists or Christian '*charismatics*' - must be similarly accepted at face value in ancient documents.<sup>139</sup> However, the very real existence of religious fantasy and superstition in the modern world will lead us to critically assess ancient documents which purport to narrate similar occurrences in similar fashion. This leads to the vital conclusion that in the use of the principle of analogy it is not the existence of any mention of para-normal phenomena that causes us to reject the historicity of an account but the manner in which such supposedly para-normal phenomena are narrated. This means that the present experience of the Christian Church must be involved in the mind of the critical theologian as he approaches the ancient text. He cannot suddenly become schizophrenic when he approaches his critical work.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

The aim of this chapter is to establish the historical status of the infancy narratives. Their non-historicity is generally assumed. We will not attempt to establish historicity in any positive sense since our knowledge of the origins of the various traditions is too obscure. However we will critically examine the common assumption of non-historicity. The chapter will include an inductive examination of each pericope followed by a discussion of the more general issues; the dating of the first and third gospels, the nature of the midrashic method, and the relationship between the two infancy narratives. References to '*Matthew*' or '*Luke*' are used for convenience, and do not reflect any particular view of authorship prior to the discussion of such matters at the end of the chapter.

The examination of the historical value of these narratives must grapple with a variety of related subjects. These include certain internal critical problems; the presence of '*legendary*' or '*supernatural*' elements; evidence of a Hebrew-Palestinian basis to the narrative; certain links or analogies with the contemporary first century historical situation; the use of the O.T, and closely related to this the influence of Jewish midrashic traditions and techniques; evidence of Matthean and Lucan theology and literary creativity; the presence of post-resurrection church theology; and certain theological implications which are often debated. Our discussion will build upon the historical survey in the second chapter. In addition the major commentaries and recent articles will be consulted and the views of various authorities on the subject will be discussed.

At this stage three important methodological points must be made. Firstly, we will not allow the presence of the '*supernatural*' to occupy undue space in our discussions. The previous chapter has not been written to support an acceptance of such phenomena as much as to neutralise the uncritical and non-historical rejection of such phenomena out of hand. Differing presuppositions on this subject have bedevilled the examination of the infancy narratives in the past. Our contention is that more objective criteria should and can be employed.

Secondly, the critical examination of the infancy narratives is faced with the equivalent of what is termed the traditio-historical principle in the examination of the gospel narratives. This may be defined briefly as follows. The gospel material of the life of Jesus shows a great deal of continuity with first-century Judaism and with the historical situation



of the early church. For some scholars a saying or incident can only be termed historical if it has no continuity with either contemporary Judaism or the situation of the early church. This may be termed the negative use of the traditio-historical principle.<sup>1</sup> Other scholars object to this on the grounds that it is absurd to think that the historical Jesus was not influenced by contemporary Judaism or did not influence the primitive Christian community. They prefer to maintain that while a lack of continuity with contemporary Judaism and the primitive church argues strongly in favour of historicity, the presence of such continuity need not argue against historicity. In other words the gospel narratives could have a *Sitz im Leben* in the life of Jesus and, by a process of selection, another *Sitz im Leben* in the life of the early church. This may be termed the positive use of the traditio-historical principle. We shall follow those scholars who accept the positive use of the traditio-historical principle.<sup>2</sup>

The equivalent problem in the infancy narratives is rather more complex. Here continuity with contemporary Judaism is divided into elements of the O.T., midrashic interpretations of the O.T., various Jewish legends, evidence of a Hebrew-Palestinian background, and contemporary historical analogies. The influence of the early church can be seen in the theology of Matthew and Luke and evidence of post-resurrection church theology. On the basis of these elements a large proportion of the infancy narratives can be accounted for. The negative use of the traditio-historical principle will in such a case lead to the verdict of non-historicity. But this verdict is over hasty. The authors of these narratives may easily have been influenced by these various factors in the manner in which they handled the historical tradition. The failure to explain the narratives on the basis of these factors may demonstrate historicity, but the fact that they can be 'explained' on this basis need not demonstrate non-historicity.<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, use will be made of the linguistic arguments of various scholars (e.g. Torrey, Plummer, Creed, Laurentin, Winter, Brown, Marshall) who have found traces of a Hebrew substratum in the Lucan narrative. Some of these traces are more persuasive than others. No attempt will be made in our discussion to weigh up each possibility. The mere fact that a certain word or construction may reflect a Hebrew original will be stated. The effect of the argument is cumulative and depends upon the sum of these traces rather than the merits of each individual case. Broadly speaking we will follow the estimation of the linguistic argument given by R. Mc L. Wilson.<sup>4</sup> Methodologically we will follow Winter when he main-

tains that the way to discover if there is a Hebrew substratum is not to examine evidence of Lucanisms and Septuagintisms (both are quite obvious throughout), but to examine evidence of Hebraisms which cannot be explained on the basis of the former two elements.<sup>5</sup>

## MATTHEW'S INFANCY NARRATIVE

### THE GENEALOGY. MATT. I.1-17

We shall firstly discuss various critical problems that arise from this passage and then consider the questions of historicity and meaning. The problems are as follows:

1. In the second list three reigning kings are excluded, usually taken as those between Joram and Uzziah.
2. Jehoiakim is left out between Josiah and Jeconiah.
3. The third list seems to have only thirteen instead of fourteen generations.
4. A textual problem exists at verse sixteen.
5. Closely related to the last point is the question of whether verse sixteen can be reconciled with the doctrine of the virgin birth, given in verse twenty.
6. Zerubbabel is assumed to be the son of Shealtiel instead of Pediah.

#### 1. The Three Excluded Kings

A great number of scholars regard the kings who have been excluded as Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah (II Kings 8.25-10.28; 11.12-20; 14.1-20). If this is the case, it can easily be explained as Matthew's artificial arrangement of the genealogy in terms of three fourteens.<sup>6</sup> This view may be correct. However the problem is not that simple. It is noteworthy that the more detailed commentaries that deal with the Greek text give a different explanation.<sup>7</sup> We can do no better than quote the succinct statement of Albright and Mann;

*The evangelist here follows the LXX of 1 Chronicles which declares (3.11) that "Joram was the father of Uzziah." Matthew continues "Uzziah was the father of Jotham", and the LXX has "Joash his son, Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jothan his son". As a result Matthew has omitted not Ahaziah (LXX Ozeias), but Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah (Uzziah). The reason for this can be found in the LXX, 1 Chron. 3.11, where the son of Joram is called Ozeia. Generally the LXX has Ochozeias (In Hebrew Ahaziah) and Ozeia = Uzziah. If, therefore, Ozeia in 1 Chron.3.11 is a mis-*

*take, it would be natural enough in copying the text to assume that Ozeia = Oseia = Uzziah and so pass on to Uzziah's son Jotham.<sup>8</sup>*

Thus rather than a deliberate 'arrangement' of the genealogy it would seem that the exclusion of three names has come about partly as a result of the text of the Septuagint that Matthew was dealing with and partly due to a lack of critical know-how on his part.

## 2. The Exclusion of Jehoiakim

Various explanations have been given for this problem. The difficulty is that it is strange that Matthew should have given only thirteen names to the third list if he believed there were fourteen. This has prompted scholars to believe that some textual corruption has occurred.<sup>9</sup> However William Hendriksen has pointed out a great drawback in such a view. He notes that each name is mentioned twice in the genealogy. If then Jehoiakim must be inserted in the place of Jechoniah in verse eleven, the amended text would have to read *'Josiah became the father of Jehoiakim and his brothers, and Jehoiakim became the father of Jechoniah at the time of the deportation to Babylon.'* The words emphasised would have to be added into the text and this cannot be accounted for as a scribal error.<sup>10</sup> This would mean that the text must be left as it stands, in which case the number of names in the scheme of three fourteens still remains a problem. If the former possibility is accepted then the numerical difficulty is solved. At this vantage point in time it seems we cannot choose between the two possibilities.

## 3. The Third List with Thirteen Names

We have already stated that this difficulty would be solved if the scribal corruption is accepted. What if it is not accepted? In such a case we are left with the question of whether Matthew miscounted.<sup>11</sup> The difficulty with this view is that it postulates a stupidity on the part of the evangelist which does not seem to be evident from the general nature of his thought.<sup>12</sup> This view, as it is proposed by Goulder, is in fact even more improbable, because he believes the author created the names in the third list fictitiously to fit in with his midrashic technique. This means that Matthew was supremely conscious of what he was doing and yet at the same time miscounted his own creation. Perhaps the best approach, if we are to reject the possibility of scribal error in verse eleven, is to take notice of the way in which Matthew deals with Jechoniah. He mentions Jechoniah in two quite different circum-

stances. At the end of the second list, which led to the fall of the Davidic monarchy, he speaks of *'Jechoniah...at the time of the deportation to Babylon'*. Then at the beginning of the new list that leads to the birth of the Messiah and the re-establishment of the Davidic Monarchy, he mentions Jechoniah in a new context, *'And after the deportation to Babylon, Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, etc.'* It would seem that Jeconiah personifies within himself both the end and the beginning, and in this sense lived two entirely different lives. Thus he was counted twice.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4 & 5. The Textual Variant at Verse Sixteen and the Virgin Birth

Commentators are evenly matched on two sides of the issue presented by various textual possibilities. Though a number of variations do exist, the real choice is between the reading of the Alexandrian and Byzantine texts and the Sinaitic Syriac. The tendency in more recent years has been to accept the traditional reading which is *'Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.'*<sup>14</sup> In this text the *ης* (feminine genitive) *εγγεννηθη* clearly refers to the virgin birth. In the remainder of the genealogy we have *εγγεννησεν* used consistently. This view is to be preferred.<sup>15</sup>

If one does accept the Sinaitic Syriac one can interpret the text as saying that Joseph was the physical father of Jesus. However it is not certain that *εγγεννησεν* can be taken to mean physical descent. In the context of Matthew's whole presentation it would more reasonably refer to a legal descent.<sup>16</sup> Allen's comment states the resulting position very well.

*He had before him the traditional facts - (a) that Christ was born of a virgin...(b) that He was the Messiah, i.e. the Son of David. How could a Jewish Christian...reconcile these facts otherwise than by supposing that Mary's husband was the legal father of Christ?...the editor simply tried to give expression to the two facts which had come down to him by tradition...and did not attempt a logical synthesis of them...*<sup>17</sup>

The question which arises for us is whether we may accept the same lack of logical synthesis. Here the issue is really whether we are prepared to see the tradition in terms of its first century Jewish environment (where legal descent was more highly valued) or whether we insist on judging the issue by our own modern cultural understanding, in which case the issue has moved right away from the discussion of the text.<sup>18</sup> The issue is then no longer germane to this discussion.

## 6. Who was Zerubbabel's Father?

Zerubbabel is taken as the son of Shealtiel instead of Pediah. Though it may be possible that Matthew had access to Hebrew texts in other parts of his Gospel it is clear that in the genealogy he was following the Septuagint. This explains the link between Shealtiel and Zerubbabel rather than Pediah and Zerubbabel.

*The Hebrew text has Zerubbabel as the son of Pediah (1 Chron.3.19), whereas the LXX has him as the son of Shealtiel. Zerubbabel has apparently been confused with his cousin.<sup>19</sup>*

## 7. The Historicity of the Genealogy

The estimation of the historicity of Matthew's genealogy differs from commentator to commentator depending on the attitude to the detailed problems just discussed and equally on the general approach to the Gospel tradition as edited by the evangelist. E.L. Abel regards the genealogy as clearly 'not historical'.<sup>20</sup> W.Walker defends its general historicity.<sup>21</sup> A fair approach is represented by Albright and Mann. 'We have no good reason to doubt that this genealogy was transmitted in good faith.' There are clearly formal inconsistencies with other texts, but 'to make charges of dishonesty or to impugn the motives of the writers, is-at this remove of time - perilous'.<sup>22</sup> Goulder attempts to explain the genealogy by his hypothesis of the 'Festal Cycle' and a Rabbinic midrashic interpretation of various O.T. texts. The great difficulty with this view is the speculative nature of almost every point, so that one wonders whether the interpretation that is postulated for the Matthean redactor is not rather due to the fertile mind of the biblical scholar. He seems to be aware of this problem. After his analysis of the genealogy and his various suggestions he notes, 'How many of these schemes was in the mind of the author is a matter of opinion.'<sup>23</sup> This means that the 'Festal Cycle' theory cannot be used to determine the historicity of the genealogy in any sense.

The difficulties which arise when one compares this passage with Luke's genealogy will be discussed when we deal with the more general issues. At this point it is sufficient to say that Matthew's genealogy should probably be taken as an attempt to show the legal rather than the physical descent of the Messiah.

## 8 The Meaning of the Genealogy

As regards the intended meaning of this genealogy, scholars agree on a number of fundamental points. The first verse sets out the basic theme. Jesus is both son of Abraham and son of David. As the son of Abraham, or in Pauline terminology, as the 'seed' of Abraham, all the nations of the world are blessed in him (Gen.12.2-3). The title 'son of David' sets the pattern for Matthew's primary theme throughout his Gospel. Jesus is the Messianic King. This Messianic theme is as evident at the end of the genealogy. Of Mary was born Jesus, 'who is called Christ' (Verse 16). The sets of fourteen generations indicate the history of God's dealing with Israel around the promise of the Messiah, i.e. Abraham - David, David - Exile, Exile - Son of David. Allen states the point succinctly; *'In David the family rose to royal power. At the captivity it lost it again. In the Christ it regained it.'*<sup>24</sup> With Jesus the 'new creation' is ushered in and the time of fulfilment comes to the people of God. Box seems to have established the view that the number fourteen is based upon the numerical value of the Hebrew letters in the name of David.<sup>25</sup> This view is now almost unanimously accepted and certainly does make the best sense. There can be no doubt that the division of three fourteens is typically Matthean. There are three temptations (3.1 - 4.11), three miracles of healing (8.1 - 15) three complaints of his adversaries (9.1 - 17), three answers to questions about fasting (9.14 - 17), and three parables of sowing (13.1 - 32), to mention only a few examples.<sup>26</sup> More speculative interpretations of the numerics of this genealogy cannot be regarded as having established themselves.

The peculiar additions which have been made to the genealogy involve the mention of Tamar in verse 3, Rahab and Ruth in verse 5 and the wife of Uriah in verse 6. At first glance the common thread seems to be one of sexual deviation. Tamar seduced her father-in-law by pretending to be a harlot (Gen.38.12 - 26), Rahab was a harlot (Joshua 2), and Bathsheba was taken in adultery by King David. This is taken to mean that Matthew was concerned to answer Jewish calumnies against Mary by pointing to similar 'irregularities' in the Davidic line itself. A closer examination faces one with the case of Ruth, who cannot be found guilty of any sexual irregularity. This leads many to find the common link in the fact that all four were of gentile origin. Tamar was a Canaanitess, Rahab was an inhabitant of Jericho prior to the conquest, Ruth was a Moabitess and Uriah was a foreigner. In this case the purpose of the genealogy is to show that God is able to save his people even through those of impure lineage and to pave the way for Matthew's final universalism (Matt.28.18). But even this view does not go to the bottom of the issue, because the mention of the four women is

not the only addition to the genealogy. C.T.Davis, in a most original article on the subject has, we believe, indicated the real nature of Matthew's additions.<sup>27</sup> The peculiar additions are not simply the names of the various women. They are in fact far more extensive and indicate that Matthew has re-interpreted the entire history of Israel to show how the peculiar circumstances of Christ's birth are a fulfilment of that history. There are some seven additions, which emphasise the following common characteristics;

*in every case a great threat to the fulfilment of God's promise has appeared. At each break the reader is confronted with a well known Israelite, a pious foreigner, and with a significant act of God which leads Israel beyond a threat to the promise and finally to the age of the Messiah. (Our emphasis)<sup>28</sup>*

This method is often compared to Rabbinic midrashic interpretation. Certainly the genealogy reveals the essentially Jewish nature of the author. The question of midrash needs rather more definition and will be dealt with at a later stage. We may note at this stage that the midrashic method of Matthew is not one that creates the facts (at least not in this passage). Matthew must be regarded as handling the genealogical material at his disposal 'in good faith'. Secondly, he believed he was dealing with objective material. He did not create it, despite the hypothesis of Goulder. However, he did handle his material with a certain amount of freedom and did interpret the material in true Jewish fashion. This is not a matter of creation as much as interpretation. Even the additions are in themselves interpretations.

#### THE ANNUNCIATION TO JOSEPH. (MATT.1.18 - 25)

The passage confronts us with the issue of the virgin birth. We shall discuss the general topic at a later stage and will not therefore go into detail at this point. Our purpose here is to deal with critical issues which arise from the text and its possible interpretation.

##### 1. The Relationship Between Joseph and Mary

The great majority of scholars acknowledge in Matthew's description of this relationship a true reflection of Judaistic law during the first century.<sup>30</sup> Betrothal in Jewish custom was far more binding than in our understanding. If the man died his fiancé would be regarded as a widow and the dissolution of such an engagement amounted to a divorce. 'After betrothal ...but before marriage, the man was legally "husband" (Gen.24.51; Deut.22.23ff)'<sup>31</sup> If Joseph had divorced her in the normal way it would have exposed Mary to public shame.<sup>32</sup>

He therefore decided to do it privately, which probably means in the sight of two or three witnesses.<sup>33</sup> This incident tends to place the passage in a Palestinian Jewish environment.

## 2. The 'Perpetual Virginity' of Mary

The state of Mary's *virginity* before and after the birth of Jesus raises an issue between Protestant and Catholic scholars. Joseph took Mary to be his wife (*παρελαβεν*) but knew her not (*εγνωσκεν*) until (*εως*) she gave birth. It is true that the term denoting Joseph's 'taking' of Mary does not denote sexual union. He merely took her as his legal wife. He made the betrothal into full marriage in terms of Jewish legal custom. However when verse twenty-five states that he 'knew' her not, the term here certainly refers to sexual intercourse. The fact that the Greek imperfect is used in conjunction with *εως ου* indicates that the negated action did take place after the point of time indicated. This militates against the belief in Mary's perpetual virginity. J. Massingberde Ford has made possibly the best case in favour of this doctrine.<sup>34</sup> All her arguments are acceptable in themselves. However they do not remove this verse in the text of Matt. 1.25. In the final analysis we must be influenced by the text itself rather than our knowledge of the possibilities of a man's behaviour in terms of his Palestinian environment.<sup>35</sup>

## 3 The Legendary Nature of the Narrative

Mention of the angel immediately raises historical questions. As we have seen this renders the whole account fictitious in the eyes of Strauss. The idea of a supernatural or divinely inspired dream raises the same questions. Albright and Mann argue for the hypothesis that the term *αγγελος* refers merely to a messenger from God and state that in the majority of cases where this term appears in the Bible the messengers that have appeared to men have been assumed to be human.<sup>36</sup> However this suggestion does not dispel the general impression given by Matthew's infancy narrative, which indicates an angelic visitor, and we are still left with the divinely inspired dream. This is unfortunately a case in point where presuppositions will weigh heavily in either direction. For those who dismiss the possibility of such events altogether the passage must be regarded as being fictitious. However such a conclusion is not demanded by the historical method itself, and those who are already convinced by the *'New Theology of the resurrection'* will see no difficulty in the birth of one who was subsequently raised from the dead being attended by the operation of divine revelation. Further if the principle of analogy may be extended in a positive sense the experience of the church and current phenomena of this type in Christian and non-Christian religious movements will give a completely different view of this passage. In such a case the presence of



such phenomena themselves are not the issue. The criterion now becomes the manner in which such phenomena are narrated. Does the narrative glory in the 'marvellous' or does it exercise a degree of restraint? It would seem to us that Matthew's rather brief description of each angelic appearance (1.20; 2.13; 2.19) indicates a good deal of restraint. This becomes especially evident when one compares it with the apocryphal accounts.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4. The Concept of the Spirit's Work

The absense of the definite article in describing the Holy Spirit (εκ πνευματος αγιου) leads most commentators to remark that the concept of the Spirit's work in this passage does not reflect the later Trinitarian belief of the church. It reflects rather the O.T. and Rabbinical concept of the creative power of Jahweh.<sup>38</sup> The general concensus of scholarship is called into question however by Albright and Mann, who state;

*In Aramaic at this time there was no difference between the definite and the indefinite article. The absence of the definite article in Greek at this point is therefore not significant.*<sup>39</sup>

Despite this observation these commentators go on to support the view that the concept of the Spirit is Old Testamental. This is a further indication of the early Palestinian character of the narrative.

#### 5. The Name 'Jesus'

Much the same point is unanimously made by commentators concerning the play on the name 'Jesus' in verse twenty-one. Such a play on the words σωσει and Ιησουν would not have been possible in Aramaic. This indicates the influence of the Hebrew at this point.<sup>40</sup>

#### 6. The Use of the Testimonia and Matthew's Midrashic Method

A considerable discussion usually results from a consideration of the testimonia in verses 22-23. *Ινα πληρωθη το ρηθεν υπο κυριου δια του προφητου* is a typically Matthean formula. (2.15; 2.23; 4.18; 8.17; 12.17; 13.35; 21.4; etc.). It raises two closely related questions; Matthew's method of interpretation - was it typically midrashic? - and his use of Isa.7.14. According to Goulder, who strongly advocates the midrashic theory, Matthew's narrative is dependent at this point upon the 'sidrah from Abraham in Gen.17.' In both accounts the birth is foretold to the father by an angel. The words of the annunciation are almost identical. He raises the question of whether Matthew had a prior tradition of the virgin birth to

work on or whether he operated as 'a darshan freely writing apologetic and edifying stories for the church'. He further notes that Joseph was also the dreamer in Genesis.<sup>41</sup> Does this not mean that Matthew created the figure of Joseph? Goulder believes that too much is built upon the figure for it not to be traditional. The question raised about the tradition of the virgin birth in regard to Matthew's *midrashic* use of Isa.7.14 must be answered by a consideration of his method in the other testimonia which appear in the infancy narrative (especially 2.15,17,23). Box, who first popularised the midrashic theory, makes it quite clear that the tradition must have led to the testimonia and not vice-versa. Goulder's attempt to explain the origin of these traditions in the reverse order does not really answer the force of Box's statement.<sup>42</sup> Further there is no evidence of Isa.7.14 being used to refer to a virgin birth in pre-Christian Judaism.<sup>43</sup> Here again the nature of the text leads us to believe that Matthew was passing on the tradition *'in good faith'*. There is a vast difference between seeking proof texts in the O.T. in order to interpret already existing tradition, and the creation of a tradition by the use of O.T. texts. In the former case the redactor would have acted in good faith, albeit in terms of his hermeneutical tradition (midrash). In the latter case one would have to conclude that he was deliberately fabricating the tradition. The weakness of much use of the midrashic theory is that this distinction is not recognised. Matthew's quotation of Isa.7.14 indicates a free use of the Septuagint. Παρθενος appears but Matthew's *'they'* (καλεσσω) is actually *'you'*. The use of *almah* in Isa.7.14 neither affirms nor denies the virginity of the girl concerned. It certainly does not demand it.<sup>44</sup> The Greek παρθενος is used to translate this term in the Septuagint. In classical Greek and in the papyri its use does not necessarily denote a virgin in the strict sense, though Matthew clearly took the word to mean virgin according to its strict usage.<sup>45</sup> However in view of the fact that the term does not always refer strictly to a virgin in either the Septuagint or in contemporary usage we may wonder whether Matthew's emphasis was on the word *'virgin'* as much as on the word *'Emmanuel'*. That it was the latter is suggested by the parallelism of the text. The angelic annunciation refers to:

- a) the conception by the Holy Spirit - verse 20,
- b) the name Jesus, denoting the Saviour - verse 21.

Matthew's quotation refers to:

- a) the virgin - verse 23a,
- b) the name Emmanuel - verse 23b.

Noticeably he deliberately translates this latter term. In each parallelism the latter part forms a climax to the former. Further, the general impression gained from the infancy narrative is that Matthew's interest lay in the child rather than the manner of his birth (2.11,14).<sup>46</sup> The validity of his interpretation of Isaiah does not therefore stand or fall upon the idea of virginity but on the idea of Emmanuel. In discussing his use of Isaiah 7.14

we should therefore not be drawn aside by the virginity issue. The question is rather, is Isaiah's reference to Emmanuel properly fulfilled in Christ?

In this regard two things ought to be said. Firstly the child referred to in Isa.7.14 obviously refers to the historical situation in the life of King Ahaz. Strictly speaking therefore it does not refer to Christ. Secondly however, it is impossible to separate the Emmanuel theme in 7.14 from the next few chapters. The term occurs again in 8.8 and 8.10, and the use of this term is not static. There is a fluidity in Isaiah's statements. The passage in Isa.9.6 - 7 comes immediately after the Emmanuel theme and similarly refers to the remarkable birth of a child. It is therefore impossible to isolate it from the preceding theme. The conclusion follows irresistibly that the whole Emmanuel theme in Isaiah moves fluidly from the historical situation of King Ahaz to the promise of the Messiah.<sup>47</sup> The only question which remains then is this: was Jesus of Nazareth the fulfilment of the Davidic-eschatological promise? If the answer is in the affirmative then one can scarcely criticise Matthew for his exegesis. Certainly we would not expect the same kind of unqualified and unspecified exegesis in a modern critical commentary on Isaiah. But then Matthew was not a modern critical commentator.<sup>48</sup>

## HEROD AND THE WISE MEN. MATT. 2.1 - 12.

### 1. The Debate Over Historicity

The problems of historical probability become more urgent with this pericope. Scholarly opinions range from the acceptance of almost everything as historical, to the rejection of almost everything. A great number accept the substance of the tradition while rejecting various elements, and affirm that the question of historicity is relatively unimportant.<sup>49</sup> For those who hold to the radical form of the midrashic theory the story is entirely the creation of the evangelist in terms of O.T. texts, Rabbinic midrashic interpretation of the O.T., and various Jewish legends. Raymond Brown believes that *'those who wish to maintain the historicity of the Matthean magi story are faced with nigh-insuperable obstacles.'*<sup>50</sup> We may begin by rejecting the approach which dispenses with the historical question altogether. This is a case of the post-Kantian distinction between facts and values which has created so many difficulties for dialectical theology. If this incident has meaning then the meaning lies in certain events. Without those events we are left with mere poetry and typology. In facing the historical question we will begin with possible historical explanations and then proceed to discuss the midrashic theory.

## 2. Historical Analogies or '*Verisimilitude*'?

The story of the Magi gains historical probability to the extent that it can be explained in terms of the beliefs, traditions and circumstances of the first century environment.<sup>51</sup> The Magi were originally a Median Priest cast who were recognised as teachers of science and religion amongst the Medo-Persians. However the term was later broadened to the meaning of '*magician*' or '*astrologer*', astrology being common in most of the East. The magos Tiri-dates is said to have come to Naples with a group of followers to see Nero, and '*returned by another way*'. The existence of Magi is thus well attested. Similarly well attested is the atmosphere of expectation concerning the birth of a world saviour in the West. Assyrian and Babylonian records contain omens of events in the West from astrological phenomena. Magi are said to have prophesied that the destroyer of Asia was born on the night of Alexander's birth. Messianic language was used of Augustus. Various attempts have been made to identify the Magi of Matthew 2.<sup>52</sup>

The belief in astrology is obviously very widely attested. There is also evidence of a Jewish astrology which may well have links with Jewish Messianism.<sup>53</sup> A good case can be made for a stellar phenomenon which may lie behind Matthew's narrative.<sup>54</sup> These details can never be given as a demonstrable hypothesis of the events simply because our knowledge of the historical situation is too obscure. However, while such obvious possibilities exist, the environment in which Christ was born is shown to be consistent with the description which Matthew gives of the events.<sup>55</sup>

## 3. Matthew's Midrashic Method

Matthew's testimonia in verse six is a free blending of the Hebrew of Mic.5.1 - 2 and elements of 2 Sam.5.2. Such free use of O.T. texts was common in Rabbinic midrashic writing. This leads into the subject of Matthew's so-called midrashic technique. Here there are a number of scholarly views in the field. One form of the midrashic theory finds the origin of this pericope in the annual readings in the early synagogues. Various combinations of O.T. texts are said to have been the starting point for the tradition. Matthew is said to have found his material in the story of Balaam, the story of Jacob and Esau, and the story of Joseph the dreamer. He is also said to have been influenced by later Jewish midrashic traditions which found their starting point in these texts.<sup>56</sup>

A number of questions are presented by such theories. Firstly they do not evoke the same setting of the Synagogue lectionaries. Does this mean that Matthew composed his story from ideas which he gleaned over a period of time? If this is the case then it tends to under-

mine the basis of this theory, i.e. that the Gospel of Matthew is the result of scriptures that 'were read repeatedly in the worship services of Matthew's church.'<sup>57</sup> If the present narrative of Matthew grew with each Sabbath reading then each pericope must be the result of one particular month at least. The wide variety of settings which scholars produce therefore tend to undermine the validity of this method. This leads to our next comment. The sources of Matthew's midrashic creation are discovered in a wide variety of texts from different parts of the O.T. They are strung together in a very loose arrangement. But with such a use of the O.T. can one not prove almost anything? The difficulty with this theory is that it proves too much. If all the advocates of the midrashic theory are correct then Matthew had an amazing ability to hold a multitude of thoughts in his mind and to create a unified picture out of an amorphous mass of O.T. texts and Jewish traditions.<sup>58</sup> Thirdly it seems evident from Matthew's use of the testimonia in the remainder of the Gospel that the tradition came first and the discovery of O.T. parallels came second. In terms of the more radical midrashic theory the present narrative is a creation of the evangelist's mind.<sup>59</sup> Fourthly it is significant that Matthew does not actually quote Num.24.17. If his narrative depended so heavily upon the O.T. one would expect him to quote what must be regarded as a central text in any midrashic theory.<sup>60</sup> These problems have led various scholars to reject the midrashic theory.<sup>61</sup> The latter comment leads to a vital distinction that needs to be made.

*The characteristic feature of midrash is that it has the biblical text as starting point, a text it meditates on, expounds, actualises or interprets in its own peculiar way.*

With Matthew on the other hand,

*his starting point is the person of Jesus, and other persons and events connected with Him, not the Old Testament itself. His narrative then cannot properly be referred to as midrash.<sup>62</sup>*

It seems in fact that we are dealing with an uncertain definition of the term 'midrash'. Perhaps it would be better to speak of 'Jewish midrash' and 'Christian midrash'. In the case of the former the text is the basis of the story. In the case of the latter the story is the basis of the text. If we use 'midrash' in this latter sense then Matthew certainly uses the midrashic method. He is obviously influenced by the terminology and narrative of the O.T., and possibly the various midrashic legends current at the time, in the form of his narrative.<sup>63</sup> In his belief that Jesus was the fulfilment of Israel's hope he constantly draws subtle parallels

between his tradition and the O.T. In this sense his method is thoroughly Jewish and thoroughly midrashic. This '*Christian midrashic*' use of an essentially Jewish method leaves the way open for the recognition of the fact that the historical analogies previously mentioned may also explain the background in which the tradition arose. One is therefore dealing with events which may well have taken place but which are narrated in a form which draws upon current folk material. Our conclusion is that the historicity of the pericope may be considered to have a fair degree of possibility, given a certain amount of poetic licence for a first century Jewish interpreter.

Finally the point is often made that the acceptance of this story leads to an acceptance of astrology. However this is not a question that is raised by the text itself. Matthew merely narrates what happened in his own way - and makes no comment about the astrological beliefs of the Magi.<sup>64</sup> Any meaning he did see in the event has to do with the recognition of the Gentiles as opposed to the blindness of the scribes and the egotism of Herod. He certainly does not advocate astrological belief by narrating the story. Speculative conclusions are left to be made by the reader himself.

## THE SLAUGHTER OF THE CHILDREN AND THE JOURNEY TO EGYPT. MT. 2.13-23

We shall once again take the historiographical question first and then proceed to discuss the Matthean method of interpretation.

### 1. Historical Analogies

As in the case of the Magi, Matthew's narrative gains in historical probability to the extent that it describes accurately the historical circumstances of those times. In this case we have to do with two figures, Herod the great and Archelaus. Here we are faced with only one difficulty, the silence of other sources (i.e. Josephus) on the destruction of the children of Nazareth. To some this remains a significant problem, but to a number of commentators there seems to be no good reason why Josephus need have known about this incident. Against the background of Herod's general activities this incident, involving perhaps twenty or thirty children, would have been quite insignificant. Further we may repeat the observation of M.McNamara, that Josephus was dependent upon others for his knowledge of Herod's life. This means that the absence of particular details from his history is to be expected.<sup>65</sup> We need not go into great detail about the story of Herod's neurotic and violent career. Augustus' remark that he would rather be Herod's pig (υς) than his son (υιος) has gone down in history as a fitting epitaph.<sup>66</sup> The danger presented by Archelaus is equally well

attested.<sup>67</sup> The journey to Egypt is similarly well placed in terms of the first century situation. A large Jewish population lived in Egypt. The border of Egypt extended well into the south of Palestine and the habit of seeking refuge in Egypt is well attested in Jewish history. The Jewish tradition that Jesus received and learned magic arts while in Egypt goes back as far as we know to Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyracanus (80 - 120 A.D.) and may reflect an independent tradition. It may equally depend upon Matthew.<sup>68</sup> The situation outlined above means that *'there is no reason to doubt the historicity of the story of the family's flight into Egypt.'*<sup>69</sup>

This verdict can only be altered if the midrashic theory can demonstrate that Matthew was using the Jewish-midrashic rather than the Christian-midrashic method. Here our discussion is occupied with four points, firstly the *'second Moses'* concept; secondly the *'second Exodus'* typology; thirdly the *'weeping Rachel'* typology; and fourthly the *'Nazarene'* testimonia.

## 2 Matthew's Midrashic Method

Regarding the first, it seems undeniable that Matthew has been influenced in his terminology by the first few chapters of Exodus. Just as Pharaoh sought to destroy the Israelite children, Herod seeks to kill the children in Bethlehem. Just as Moses flees from the situation and later returns, so Jesus flees and returns. Even the terminology is the same (Exod. 4.19 - Matt.2.20). Further in various Jewish legends Moses' father was purported to have been warned in a dream of the immediate danger, and Pharaoh was supposedly warned by revelation that a great figure was to be born in his domain. He then summoned the magicians of the land to interpret the omens he had received.<sup>70</sup> Apart from Jewish legends the *'wicked king'* theme was common in the ancient east. *'Similar stories are told of the infancy of Heracles, Sargon 1, Cyrus, Romulus and Remus, and especially Cypsalus, son of Action.'*<sup>71</sup> It is also evident that the early church was inclined to see a parallel between the history of Israel, especially the Exodus, and the life of Christ and his church (1 Cor.10.1-4; 1 Cor.5.7 - 8).

The *'second Moses'* theme seems to many to run through the Gospel of Matthew, and possibly reflects a midrashic meditation on Deut.18.15. *'Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like myself...to him you must listen.'* Just as Moses gave the law on Mount Sinai, so Jesus gave the new law on the Mount. Just as Moses was tested during forty days and forty nights in the Sinai desert, so Jesus was tested in the wilderness during forty days and forty nights. Just as Moses was given a vision of the promised land before his death (Deut.34.1 - 3) so Jesus was able to see all the kingdoms of the world from the mount of temptation. Rabbinic tradition even speculated that the redemption of the Messiah would

repeat the liberation of Israel from Egypt under the leadership of Moses.<sup>72</sup>

Goulder finds the background of Matthew's narrative in the synagogue readings on the seventh sabbath of the annual cycle. This included Gen.29.9 - 31.55, the birth of Jacob's sons by Leah, and Rachel's grieving over her barrenness. From this starting point the evangelist built up the story with the aid of Gen.35.16-21, Rachel's death, Ex.1-4, Moses' flight and return, and Judges 13, the story of the birth of Samson, the Nazarite. In the wording of the birth of Samson (Judges 13: 5,7) Matthew found his words for the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1: 20-21). He therefore ends his story with another '*quotation*' of Judges 13 (Matt. 2: 23).<sup>73</sup>

C.H. Cave, following D. Daube, sees the background for the story in the Passover Haggadah, in particular the midrash on Deut. 26: 5. He does not agree that Exodus 1-2 can be the basis of this story, because Moses fled from Egypt while Jesus fled to Egypt. In the Passover Haggadah all Israel is said to have gone down to Egypt '*in Jacob*'. In similar fashion the whole of the new Israel leaves Egypt '*in Christ*', hence the use of Hosea 11:1. Significantly in the Synagogue reading the story of Jacob's journey into Egypt (Gen. 46: 28) was linked with the prophetic lesson: Hosea 10:11-11:11. The testimonia of Jer. 31:15 comes from the fact that in the second year of the Synagogue lectionary Exodus 13:1 (the redemption of the first-born of Israel) was linked with Jeremiah 31:8f. The two elements were therefore joined together by an association of ideas. A later midrash said that at the time of the exile Rachel rose from her grave and that, because of her intercessions, the people were eventually allowed to return to their land. The use of the Nazarene testimonia comes from the fact that two weeks before Passover Judges 13 (the Nazarite Samson) was read in conjunction with Num. 6: 1f, the law of the Nazarite.<sup>74</sup>

Can such information lead to the conclusion that Matthew used the Jewish midrashic method, i.e. that the starting point of the narrative is to be found in the O.T. texts rather than an historical tradition? For various reasons this conclusion is not acceptable. Firstly, as in the former pericope, advocates of the midrashic theory disagree with each other and find different backgrounds for this narrative.<sup>75</sup> The diversity of '*typological*' interpretations does not give weight to this hypothesis. Just as the typological method of interpreting the scriptures led the Alexandrian fathers into many devious paths, one wonders whether the Jewish midrashic theory for the N.T. is not in danger of the same subjectivity.

Secondly significance is often found in the fact that certain Torah and prophetic lessons were linked together. This association of ideas is supposed to have given Matthew his lead.



But some of these linkings are so obvious that one wonders why Matthew needs to have depended upon the Synagogue lectionary at all. For instance the linking of Numbers 6 with Judges 13 is quite obvious. The link between Genesis 46 and Hosea 10-11 is hardly less obvious. This tends to undermine the idea that the Synagogue readings actually prompted Matthew into his ideas.

Thirdly the particular form of Matthew's three testimonia in this section do not exactly support the idea that the O.T. texts formed the basis of his narrative. The less obvious the interpretation, the more the likelihood that the historical tradition led to the proof texts and the less the likelihood that the order was in the reverse. These testimonia will be discussed presently. It is sufficient to note at this juncture that no text has ever been found for the residence in Nazareth; that Rachel's weeping for the Jewish exiles needs some thought for it to be linked with the death of the infants; and that the parallel between Israel's Exodus and Christ's return from Egypt needs some reflection to be understood.<sup>76</sup>

Fourthly the extant Jewish legends about the birth of Moses came from the eighth century AD.<sup>77</sup> While it is true that the outlines of this legend were known to Josephus we cannot be sure that it was known to Matthew. Matthew's dependance upon it remains in the area of speculation.

Lastly, it is not certain that the '*second Moses*' typology can be traced in Matthew's theology. One can hardly compare Moses' inspired vision of the promised land prior to his death with the satanic view of the world which Jesus had to endure on the mount of temptation. Matthew's concern seems to be to portray Jesus as a '*greater-than-Moses*' (note for instance the oft-repeated '*but I say unto you*' e.g. Matt. 5-7) rather than a second Moses.<sup>78</sup> We therefore reject the view that Matthew used a Jewish midrashic method.<sup>79</sup> Having said this we must go on to affirm that he did use a Christian midrashic method. Such a theory is the only way to sufficiently explain the testimonia in this pericope. To begin with the last first, the word-play on *Naζωπαως* is typical of Rabbinic midrashic method. This may be compared with the oft-repeated saying '*Read not hanûth (engraved) but herûth (freedom)*'<sup>80</sup> No decisive answer to Matthew's testimonia in 2.23 has yet been given, though various possibilities exist.<sup>81</sup> Which-ever theory is correct, it seems most probable that Matthew was using the typically Rabbinic, and in fact typically prophetic (see Mic. 1: 10-11) habit of word-play.<sup>82</sup> In this sense he was using the Christian midrashic method. At this point we would do better not to conclude that Matthew was mistaken about his linguistics.

The reference to Jer. 31:15 can only be explained by a sympathetic understanding of Matthew's theological approach to the O.T. Rachel gave birth to Ephraim and Manasseh (who could represent Israel) and Benjamin (who could represent Judah). As the wife of Israel she was also the mother of Israel-Judah. As her two children (first Israel, and then Judah) go into exile she weeps for them. The prophetic language is obviously not meant to be taken quite literally. This is the language of emotive description. But she must not always weep (Jer. 31:16) because the Lord will make a new covenant with his people (Jer. 31:31). The children of Israel were returned to their land. But according to Rabbinic tradition Rachel still weeps for those who are dispersed in distant lands. She will continue to weep until all the promises to Abraham have been fulfilled and her children are free in the land. Here in Nazareth is an event which calls for much weeping on her part. Evidently the promises to Abraham remain unfulfilled. But wait; one child has escaped, and therein lies her consolation! Her weeping will now finally be turned to joy. Such theological interpretation of the O.T. may be termed Christian midrash.<sup>83</sup>

In the case of Hosea 11:1 the parallel between the O.T. and the N.T. is not as difficult to comprehend. God called Israel out of Egypt; *Thus says the Lord, "Israel is my first-born son, and I say to you, let my son go that he may serve me"'* (Ex 4:22). The same concept is expressed again in Hosea. Just as the Old Israel was freed from bondage, so the new Israel has its exodus (Lk. 9:31 *ελεγον την εξοδον αυτου*, 1 Cor. 5:7-8; 10:1-4). This exodus was grounded in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, who began his own career with an exodus. Once again, out of Egypt, God was calling his son (singular and corporate).<sup>84</sup>

## THE UNITY OF MATT. 1 - 2 WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE GOSPEL

The idea that the author of Matt. 1 and 2 is also the author of the main body of the Gospel has already emerged in the discussion of the text at various points. We must now explore in greater detail whether this assumption is correct. Here there are various tests which can be used. Firstly there is the linguistic test: do we find characteristically Matthean terminology in these two chapters? Secondly there is the structural test: is Matt. 1-2 structurally part of the whole? Thirdly there is the theological test: does Matthew have a certain theological approach, and is this evident in these two chapters?

### 1. Linguistic Unity

In the first instance we may safely conclude that a scholarly consensus exists and that

Matt. 1-2 evidences typically Matthean terminology and diction. Amongst them we may refer to the linguistic work of Vincent Taylor, and more recently, Goulder.<sup>85</sup>

## 2. Structural Unity

Moving on to the structure of Matt. 1-2, we come to an issue which has not led to a real consensus. For various reasons one may regard the infancy narrative as a section on its own. At 3:1ff Matthew begins to depend upon Mark. This may indicate that Matt. 1-2 comes from another source. There are characteristics which are special to the infancy narrative. There is a considerable break in time between 2:23 and 3:1ff. John the Baptist is suddenly introduced in 3:1ff. There is an abrupt change of subject. The division of Matthew into five blocks of teaching and narrative material due to the ending formulae ( *εγενετο οτε ετελεσεν ο ιησους τους λογους τουτους* 7.28) has led scholars to regard the prologue (Matt. 1-2) and the epilogue ( the passion narrative ) as in some sense not especially Matthean.

However there are reasons for regarding Matt. 1-2 as structurally continuous with the body of the Gospel which we believe are strong enough to dispel any doubts that may arise due to these points. These have been ably presented by Edgar Krentz. Most decisive is his comment on the use of the testimonia. Five appear in the infancy narrative with a specifically geographical interest. Two more appear in 3.1-4.16 and continue the geographical note. This makes 7, a favourite Matthean number, and suggests that Matt. 1:1 to 4:16 should be regarded as a structural unity.<sup>86</sup> Recently a number of scholars have advocated the view that the genealogy is the key to the understanding of the whole gospel. This adds weight to the view that the infancy narrative is definitely part of the whole, if not a crucial part of the whole.<sup>87</sup>

## 3. Theological Unity

Typically Matthean theological emphases are quite evident in the infancy narrative. Of the various Matthean theological emphases, the following appear in this section. Firstly, Matthew throughout his Gospel is at pains to show how Jesus fulfilled the O.T. The formula quotations in Matt. 1-2 bear witness to the same emphasis. Secondly, Matthew's Gospel is characterized by its Messianic interest. This is evident in the genealogy and in 1:20 (Son of David), 2:2 and 2:16. Thirdly, the relationship between Judaism and Christianity is especially a prominent interest of Matthew. Many scholars believe Matthew's approach to this issue was markedly polemic. The way in which the faith of the Magi is contrasted with the disinterest of the scribes (2:4f) and the antagonism of Herod indicates the same attitude. The story of the Magi also introduces Matthew's universalism (28:18).

We conclude that Matthew's infancy narrative is an integral part of the Gospel, and that the marks of a single author (authors?) are evident throughout.

## REDACTION CRITICISM OF MATTHEW'S INFANCY NARRATIVE

The redaction-critical approach to Matthew was established with the appearance of *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*.<sup>88</sup> We shall examine the work of C.T. Davis who has specialised in the application of this method to Matthew's infancy narrative. (His Ph. D. Dissertation was *Tradition and Redaction in Matthew 1-2*.)<sup>89</sup> Davis' article is a concise statement of his research and is closely argued.

Working from Krister Stendahl's insight that these chapters can only be properly understood by an appreciation of the formula quotations, he sets to work to answer two questions;

*To what extent were the formula quotations used to interpret the tradition or traditions to which they were appended?*

*Does the material to which they were appended give linguistic and structural evidence for the existence of a carefully organised pre-Matthean tradition?*

He takes as his clue the suggestion of W.L. Knox that 1:18-25, 2:13-15 and 2:19-23 give evidence of being a pre-Matthean tradition.<sup>90</sup>

Davis' argument is persuasive at many points. However, it has weaknesses. The starting point for the whole procedure is the separation of 2:19-21 from 2:22-23. Some of the reasons for this are dubious. He says 2:19-21 in no way anticipates or requires 2:22-23. But if Matthew's infancy narrative ended with 2:21 we would be left with a vague knowledge that Joseph went and dwelt somewhere in Judea. Surely the statement that he went back to Judea requires some sort of qualification or specification? Davis notes that there is similarity between 2:19-21 and 2:22-23; 'in both Joseph is advised through a dream by a divine agent, to go into a certain geographical region.' This similarity cannot be underestimated. The angel-revelation theme is characteristic of Matthew's infancy narrative and so is the geographical interest. This would indicate that 2:22-23 is typically Matthean or typically 'redactional'. Davis says vs. 22 contradicts vs. 21 because Joseph did not go into Judea as the angel directed, but was led rather by his own motivations. However, the angel did not command Joseph to go back to Judea, but to Israel (vs. 20), and Galilee can easily be regarded as part of Israel.<sup>91</sup> It is difficult to understand what contradiction exists between vs. 21 and vs. 22. In discussing the connection between 2:13-15a and 16-18 Davis says that nothing links them together apart from the 'catchword', 'Herod'. But is 'Herod' merely a 'catchword'?

Surely this represents the theme that runs throughout the second chapter and links it together as one continuous whole.<sup>92</sup> If Davis' redaction-critical analysis is correct then we would not expect to find that much typically Matthean terminology in the pre-Matthean tradition. However, in his pillar passage, 2:19-21, the following typically Matthean words occur: *ιδου*, *φαινομαι*, *κατ οναρ*, *λεγομενος*, *εγερθεις*, *γη* and *name*, and the following semi-Matthean words occur: *αγγελος κυριου*, *παραλαμβανω* and *πορευομαι*.<sup>93</sup>

True, Matthew may have reproduced a tradition which he received with his own terminology, but nevertheless this tends to undermine the idea of a separate, identifiable tradition. Lastly, and by no means least, the great difficulty of all such redaction-criticism, is its unverifiability. By this we refer to the fact that with the redaction-criticism of some Matthean passages we know his source (Mark), or we have a reasonable idea of his source (Q in Luke), while in the infancy narrative and in all especially Matthean material, we have no objective check on the method of redaction-criticism. All remains in the area of speculation. Redaction-criticism is yet a relatively young discipline, and it may well be the case that subsequent research will reveal that it can only be used successfully where the source material is available to us.

However, despite these criticisms, Davis' thesis does have some plausibility. It may well be a true reflection of the relationship between tradition and redaction in Matthew's infancy narrative. This leads to the positive results of such an inquiry. In his conclusion Davis gives what he believes to be the pre-Matthean tradition. Here it is noticeable that part of every 'event' which Matthew relates remains. The virgin birth remains. The visit of the Magi remains. The role of Herod remains, though it has diminished. The flight to Egypt and the return remain. In other words, what Matthew added to his tradition is not the actual story of the events, but an interpretation of those events. This tends to support our contention that Matthew operated with a Christian-midrashic rather than a Jewish-midrashic method. He did not fabricate the events. He attempted to pass on the tradition *'in good faith.'*<sup>94</sup>

## THE DATE AND ORIGIN OF THE MATTHEAN INFANCY TRADITION

If the Matthean infancy narrative, in its present form, is clearly an integral part of the Gospel as a whole, then the date and origin of this narrative is intimately involved with the date and authorship of Matthew's Gospel.

## 1. Views of Matthean Authorship

In recent research three positions have emerged concerning the authorship and the origin of Matthew's Gospel. There is firstly the hypothesis of a community product, secondly the understanding of 'Matthew' as an editorial theologian, and thirdly the view of Matthew's Gospel as including an eyewitness deposit.<sup>95</sup> The last view should be dissociated from the older, traditional belief in apostolic authorship.

The first view was advocated by G.D. Kilpatrick.<sup>96</sup> He was followed by Krister Stendahl.<sup>97</sup> Kilpatrick advocated the view that Mark, 'Q' and 'M' were read in a church which developed a 'targum' of these Scriptures and finally produced a *'kind of revised gospel book, conveniently incorporating into one volume the three documents of Mark, "Q" and "M"'*<sup>98</sup> Stendahl, working on the *'Habakkuk commentary'* produced by the Qumran community, advocated the view that the Gospel was shaped by the cataphetical teaching of the early church. It was formulated as a type of training manual to be used by teachers in the community. This view tended to deny the individual contribution of the evangelist, and was accordingly unable to account for the strong marks of an individual and original mind which pervades the Gospel. This led to a reaction in the opposite direction, and to the second view, advocated by Bornkamm, Held and Barth,<sup>99</sup> The advantage of this view is that it can account for the clear evidence which is mounting as a result of the redaction-critical method.

Clearly the author shaped the tradition he had received in order to present Jesus in a particular manner. The author is now no longer the school, but the individual representative of a community which may have had a school. This position then goes further and emphasises that the author was a theologian in his own right who was formulating what he believed to be the answer to a particular church situation. In this case we do not find the original tradition of Jesus in Matthew as much as an understanding of Jesus in a particular church situation. This view has the difficulty of neglecting the tradition received, at the expense of the tradition remoulded. Both these positions, the first and the second, have the difficulty of being unable to explain the persistent tradition of the early church concerning apostolic authorship.<sup>100</sup> But the older view of apostolic authorship could not explain the fact that an apostolic author had based his work upon a non-apostolic writer (Mark).<sup>101</sup> In addition, the tradition it relied upon (i.e. Papias) mentioned a Hebrew Gospel whereas the present Matthew was clearly written in Greek. A view was needed which could account for both the redactional nature of Matthew's Gospel and the persistent tradition of the early church. In other words, there was need of an hypothesis which could account for the initial and formative influence of an apostolic witness while at the same time accounting for the

evident non-apostolic nature of the present tradition (in extant Gospel). The need for the former requirement was made more evident by the discovery of elements in Matthew which indicated that the tension between church and synagogue was still very much alive when the tradition was first documented. These elements have been highlighted by the work of Gunther Bornkamm, G. Barth and Sjef van Tilborg.<sup>102</sup> They seem to demand a time before the church had totally lost touch with the synagogue.<sup>103</sup> These requirements lead to the third position.

Firstly, C.F.D. Moule advocated the view that behind the present Gospel (extant Matthew) there lies a collection of *'Aramaic traditions which were translated and ultimately collected, conflated and arranged together with other material, by another scribe, a Greek writer'*.<sup>104</sup> Secondly, and more recently, Robert H. Gundry has drawn his conclusions from a detailed investigation of the Matthean quotations of the O. T.<sup>105</sup> He believes that these quotations give evidence of a triple linguistic tradition, based upon Septuagintal, Aramaic and Hebrew sources. In his view, such a triple language phenomenon could only occur in Palestine.<sup>106</sup> He then goes on to affirm the view that this Palestinian tradition emanates from the apostle Matthew.<sup>107</sup>

With the information at our disposal at the present, it is not possible to be dogmatic about any view of Matthean authorship. What does seem to be required though, is:

- a) in some sense a recognition of the early church tradition on apostolic authorship,
- b) a recognition of the redactional nature of the present Gospel, and
- c) a recognition of the Jewish-Palestinian origins of much of the material.<sup>108</sup>

The last point is one which is particularly required in the case of the infancy narratives. C.T. Davis, having specialised in the study of this infancy narrative, can state what amounts to a scholarly consensus, *'One point can be regarded as established by this line of research: the narratives of Matt. 1:18-2:23 are closely related in language, structure, and content, to Jewish tradition'*.<sup>109</sup> This would lead us to believe that the infancy narrative is included in that part of the tradition which is Jewish-Palestinian.<sup>110</sup> Its whole character, as we have seen from the Christian-midrashic method which it displays, is thoroughly Jewish.

## 2. Views on Matthean Dating

Matthew is usually dated after the fall of Jerusalem and often between A.D. 80 and 100.<sup>111</sup> Conservative scholars have however argued for a date prior to the fall of Jerusalem

on the grounds that one cannot deny the possibility of a real prediction in Matt. 24 on a *priori* grounds.<sup>112</sup> Recently John A.T. Robinson has, true to style, rather overturned the tables on this issue.<sup>113</sup> He has strongly repudiated the usual arguments based on the fall of Jerusalem and the synoptic records of Christ's prediction of this event. Far from indicating a date after A.D. 70, these passages (Mk. 13; Lk. 27; Matt. 24) argue for a date prior to A.D. 70 for all three synoptics.<sup>114</sup> He then gives further reasons for an earlier dating of Matthew. There are certain links between Paul and the Matthean tradition, indicating that Paul may have known what Robinson calls the proto-Matthean collection. For various reasons Matthew's gospel shows evidence of a long history of tradition. Different layers of tradition can be seen. Matthew therefore has some elements which indicate that it is the earliest gospel and some that it is the latest synoptic gospel. Papias's statement, while not fitting the extant gospel of Matthew, may therefore fit the earlier proto-Matthean collection. Matthew also has elements which indicate that the break with Judaism was not yet complete. The tension between church and synagogue was still acutely felt. His interest in Sabbath laws (Matt. 12:5-7), in sacrifice (9:13), his denunciation of the Sadducees (16:1-12), and his interest in the half-shekel tax (17:24-27) all argue for a date before the destruction of the temple, when all such issues would have become obsolete. Robinson feels these elements point to a date between A.D. 50 and 64. There are also links between the concept of the parousia in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians and Matthew 24.<sup>115</sup> Robinson therefore dates the development and the final writing of Matthew between A.D. 40 and 64.<sup>116</sup>

Not all scholars will agree with Robinson's conclusions. Our view is that his arguments on the fall of Jerusalem and Matt. 24 cannot be easily denied. His work will certainly mean that one can no longer assume a date for Matthew in the 80's. This is one of the weaknesses of Raymond Brown's approach to the infancy narratives.<sup>117</sup> A date prior to A.D. 70 can never be proved. On the other hand it remains a distinct possibility.

Even if a date after A.D. 80 were to be accepted we could not deny the possibility of members of the family of Jesus and of the primitive Palestinian Christian community being alive when Matthew was written. Given the average length of human life, the brothers of Jesus may easily have lived to A.D. 80.<sup>118</sup> Further, in some of the Christian communities in Palestine there must have been those who had known the mother of Jesus. All these points become more persuasive if one accepts a date for Matthew between A.D. 40 and 64. If one adds to this the clearly Palestinian character of the infancy narrative, and then in addition the fact that the subtraction of Matthew's editorial work (the testimonia) leaves a basic tradition intact, one is hard pressed to deny that the pre-Matthean part of the infancy narrative could have arisen from the family of Jesus.<sup>119</sup> In fact this becomes the



most probable hypothesis. While one can never demonstrate that Matthew's infancy narrative did come from the family of Jesus, one has to maintain that the infancy tradition arose in proximity to the tradition of the family of Jesus, i.e. it arose in the same socio-cultural environment. The only way in which one can escape this conclusion is either to deny the existence of Christ's family, or to date the gospel of Matthew in the latest part of the first century or perhaps in the second century. It becomes difficult to accept that the pre-Matthean tradition was only influenced by current Jewish midrashic legends based upon the O.T. stories of Joseph, Moses/Pharaoh and Balaam. The kind of transmissional process which Raymond Brown describes in his study of the pre-Matthean material sounds persuasive if it is considered in isolation from the question of dating. He discusses it in isolation from the question of dating because he assumes the late dating of Matthew to be correct. Once the proximity of the family of Christ to the development of Matthew's tradition is considered then it becomes more difficult to accept. Would not the traditions emanating from the family of Jesus have had greater effect upon the early Palestinian church than current midrashic legends? <sup>120</sup>

This leads to the final conclusion that it is difficult, and indeed unwarranted, to reject the substantial historicity of Matthew's infancy narrative.

## LUKE'S INFANCY NARRATIVE

### THE LUCAN PROLOGUE AND THE INFANCY NARRATIVE. 1.1 - 4

The prologue is not part of the infancy narrative. The change in style is quite evident. However, coming as it does immediately before the infancy narrative, its claims can hardly exclude the infancy narrative. In any understanding of the origin and source of the infancy narrative, hypotheses must take account of the claims which are made in the prologue.

The first point to be noted, and one which most commentators note, is the classical Greek flavouring of this sentence. Alfred Plummer takes *επειδηπερ, επεχειρησαν, αναταξασθαι, διηγησησιν* and *καθεξης* to be classical rather than biblical terminology.<sup>121</sup> More recent commentators repeat this observation.<sup>122</sup> The structure of the sentence (idiomatic rather than co-ordinate) is typical of the prologues of Greek historians. This does not mean that Luke was necessarily trained in Greek historiography, but it does mean that he was aware of its general requirements.

*καθως παρεδωσαν* - this normally refers to oral tradition, but need not exclude written

tradition.<sup>123</sup> Luke evidently made use of both oral and written traditions (*αναταξασθαι, διηγησθαι*).

*αυτοπται και υπηρεται* – the two terms are not mutually exclusive. The ‘ministers’ or ‘attendants’ may or may not have been eye-witnesses as well. At any rate, Luke’s material was taken from both eye-witnesses and the early preachers. Six claims may be noted from this prologue:

1. *παρηκολουθηκοτι* – the word literally means ‘to follow a person closely so as to always be near to him.’ In this context it means that Luke has followed the story carefully so as to bring himself fully abreast of the events.<sup>124</sup>
2. *ανωθεν* – refers to the beginning of the story rather than to thoroughness. Luke claims to have gone to the beginning of the tradition and investigated the events ‘from the first’. While the beginning of the gospel was usually taken as the ministry of John the Baptist ( Acts 1.22 ), the fact that Luke has included the infancy narrative indicates that his ‘first’ went back further. The content of the infancy narrative must therefore be included in his claims.<sup>125</sup>
3. *πασιν* – ‘all the events’<sup>126</sup> This refers to thoroughness.
4. *ακριβως* – this refers to accuracy.
5. *καθεξης* – this would obviously refer to chronological order but may just as well refer to the general arrangement and structure of the narrative.<sup>127</sup>
6. *επιγνωσ... ασφαλειαν* – ‘that you may receive sure information’, ‘that which may be relied upon’, ‘to learn the plain truth.’<sup>128</sup>

Such a sentence cannot be regarded as a mere literary convention fittingly affixed to the narrative. When Luke claims the basis of his work was eye-witness testimony he means this in all seriousness;

*an ancient writer could no more claim the authority of eye-witnesses without expecting his statement to be believed than a modern.*<sup>129</sup>

The implications for the infancy narrative are important. Luke believes he is writing history. Clearly he does not understand that to mean ‘critical history’ in the modern sense. He does write from a particular point of view (*πεπληροφορημενων* – ‘fulfilled’, seems to connote revelatory significance), and believes the events he records have revelatory significance.<sup>130</sup> He may also have been creative in his handling of the tradition, though he does not regard himself as the creator of the tradition. Therefore, if it can be demonstrated that Luke actually created the tradition, the implication follows irresistably that he was being deliberately dishonest. The problems created by such an understanding of Luke have then to be weighed up against the arguments which indicate that he created the tradition. What is not

possible is to hold the view that Luke *'sincerely' 'created'* the tradition. In view of the prologue these two terms are mutually exclusive.

## THE TEXT OF THE INFANCY NARRATIVE

Unlike Matthew's narrative, which has few issues of textual-critical debate, the Lucan narrative has raised a considerable amount of disagreement, and numerous theories of interpolation have been advocated. The relevant verses are 1:27; 1:34-35 36-37; 1:46; 2:5; 3:22-23. We need not repeat the detailed arguments as these have already been given in the second chapter in connection with the work of Vincent Taylor and Gresham Machen.<sup>131</sup> We may safely conclude though that the argument must go to Gresham Machen. It is noticeable that since that time the majority of commentators have rejected the interpolation hypothesis in regard to the virgin birth.<sup>132</sup>

It is significant too that Vincent Taylor, who was perhaps the most able advocate of the hypothesis and who gave it its most scholarly presentation, had to concede that Luke 1:34-35 came from the hand of Luke. The complicated nature of the hypothesis which he had to formulate as a result of this admission is the clearest indication of its falsity. He admitted that the complexity of his hypothesis was problematical. In addition we may point out that these interpolation hypotheses were not caused by the ambiguity of the textual tradition. Such ambiguity as does exist is minimal. The real cause of these hypotheses was a dogmatic rejection of the doctrine of the virgin birth. Any theory which has to tamper with the text in order to remove certain doctrinal problems is immediately suspect and needs considerable support before it can be accepted. This particular hypothesis is beset with difficulties and so must be rejected. The only significant textual issue which remains open to debate is the question of whether the Magnificat should be ascribed to Mary or Elizabeth (Lk. 1:46). We shall deal with this subject when we deal with the Magnificat itself.

## THE ANNUNCIATION TO ZECHARIAH . LK. 1:5-25

The special issues related to this section are firstly the *'supernatural'* elements (the vision, the angel, and the dumbness), secondly the Hebrew-Palestinian elements which scholars have often found in this narrative, and thirdly the midrashic manner in which the story is moulded on important O.T. texts. The historical probability of the section will be tested by the conclusions which these three areas tend to produce.

### 1. The Supernatural Elements

Firstly, regarding the *'supernatural'* elements, those who are influenced by rationalistic presuppositions, such as D.F. Strauss, will have to reject the whole account out of hand. If

one presumes that such things cannot happen then the story before us can only be regarded as a legend. However, we have shown in the last chapter that such presuppositions are not necessary to the historical discipline. Our question is rather; are these elements narrated in such a manner as to give the impression of superstitious wonder, or are they narrated soberly and reservedly? A number of commentators are impressed by the general reserve of this narrative. It is noteworthy that the angel is not described at all. His message is merely recounted. Further, the recipient of the message is not in any way glorified or elevated by the experience. He becomes dumb and is rather humiliated before the people. The only reaction on his part which is recounted is his fear, which is certainly not an unusual reaction to such phenomena. If we are prepared to approach this narrative from the perspective of the *'New Theology of the Resurrection'* then there is nothing in it which is out of place. The angelic revelation must be placed in the same category as the angelic appearances at the time of the resurrection and the appearances of the resurrected Christ. Furthermore, the miraculous events are set in a thoroughly O.T. environment. We may affirm the words of Alfred Plummer, *'there is no violent rupture with the past in making this new departure'*.<sup>133</sup> The miraculous elements cannot therefore be used as an argument either against or in favour of the historicity of this account. Such an issue must be decided on other grounds.<sup>134</sup> This leads to the other two points.

## 2. Evidence of a Hebrew Source

The presence of an underlying Hebrew tradition or text, and the expression of first century Jewish-Palestinian customs is evident to a long-standing scholarly tradition, including Alfred Plummer, Alfred Edersheim, Charles Torrey, J.M. Creed, Paul Winter, Rene Laurentin, E. Earle Ellis and Howard Marshall. Evidences of an underlying Hebrew source or tradition have been found in Luke 1:5,6,7,13,15,17,20.<sup>135</sup>

## 3. The Palestinian Background and Jewish Legends

As regards the priestly courses (1:5), the casting of the lots (1:9), the burning of incense, and the general description of the temple ceremonies we may refer again to Alfred Edersheim and Paul Winter.<sup>136</sup> More recently E. Earle Ellis and Raymond Brown have endorsed their statements.<sup>137</sup> It seems to be particularly difficult to disagree with Winter when he says that these details could not have been written by a gentile author after A.D. 70 with no recourse to an earlier Hebrew-Palestinian tradition. If Rene Laurentin is right it is even more difficult to see how a Greek writer in a Hellenistic community after A.D. 70 could have re-

flected such a subtle play on Hebrew words. Luke's description of the angelic appearance also fits in very well with the 'faith-situation' of first century Judaism.<sup>138</sup> Pierre Benoit has also shown how the exact nature of Zechariah's dumbness, the priestly nature of John's parents, and their old age, do not seem to be accounted for in terms of O.T. texts and suggestions from Rabbinical tradition.<sup>139</sup> Not only are the details of the narrative distinctly Palestinian, but the story itself fits in well with the legends which were common in first century Judaism. We refer to Winter's detailed research on PseudoPhilo and the legend of the birth of Rabbi Yismael.<sup>140</sup> The fact that Luke's account fits into the general situation in which these legends were retold and the fact that parallels exist between them, does not mean however that Luke's narrative must also be legendary. The vital difference here is that Luke claims to have received reliable information and claims to be narrating historical events. As R. McL. Wilson has pointed out, Luke's use of Mark and Q do not lead us to the conclusion that he was given to fantasy.<sup>141</sup> An equally warrantable conclusion is therefore that the form of Luke's narrative was moulded by the terminology and format of Jewish folk-lore, while the substance of the Lucan redaction remains grounded on an historical tradition. The balanced statement of Pierre Benoit, which we have already alluded to, seems to state the situation very well.<sup>142</sup> The conclusion is supported by the research of Ederheim, who discovered that in many details this section differs from the theological notions current at the time. For instance it was believed that Elijah would return in person. In Luke's account John comes '*in the spirit and power of Elijah*' and he is a separate individual, born of Elizabeth and Zechariah. The position of the angel at the altar also differs from current expectation.<sup>143</sup>

The impression of the Hebraic elements of this passage have been so strong that Martin Dibelius and Philipp Vielhauer have advocated the hypothesis of an independent Baptist source behind Lk. 1.5-25 and 57-66a.<sup>144</sup> However, this seems to go too far, and Pierre Benoit's critical examination of this hypothesis has left it without much in its favour.<sup>145</sup> Ultimately, in the oral tradition, a Baptist source may be possible, though it is just as possible that the details of John's birth were transmitted in the Christian community from the beginning.<sup>146</sup>

#### 4. The Use of the O.T. and Luke's Midrashic Method

Matching the Hebrew-Palestinian character of this narrative is the third point which has been referred to. The story closely parallels numerous O.T. stories. Sometimes there are even verbal correspondences. Added to this is the fact that in so many ways the text is typically Lucan. We refer here to the work of Harnack, Turner and Benoit.<sup>147</sup>

The conclusion that the present narrative comes from the hand of Luke may be regarded as finally established. Not even Winter, who argues for the Hebrew origin of the tradition, doubts this. The most important O.T. parallels are as follows:

Zechariah and Elizabeth correspond to Abraham and Sarah. Like Sarah, Elizabeth is barren. Both couples were said to be '*advanced in years*'. Like Abraham, Zechariah doubts the promise (Gen. 15:18 - Luke 1:18). In this latter case there are verbal correspondences between the Septuagint and Luke. The appearance of the angel to Zechariah is similar to the experience of Abraham (Gen. 18:9-15) and Manoah (Jud. 13:2-25). The text of Lk. 1:13 has verbal similarities with Gen. 18:10,13 and Jud. 13:3,7. Lk. 1:17 follows the text of Mal. 3:1 and 4:5-6. The prohibition of wine and strong drink reflects O.T. teachings on the Nazarite vow (Jud. 13:4-5; Num. 6:2-4). Zechariah's reply in Luke 1:18 has verbal similarities with Gen. 15:8. The continuation of Luke's account of Zechariah and the angel has many resemblances to Daniel chapter 10. Like Daniel (10:15) Zechariah was struck dumb. As with Daniel (10:12) the angel said '*fear not*' (Lk. 1:13). Daniel's prayer had been heard (Dan. 10:12), and so had Zechariah's (Lk. 1:13). The name given to the angel is the same in both accounts.<sup>148</sup> Clearly Luke has been strongly influenced by Genesis, Judges and Daniel, in addition to various other texts. The parallels are evident to anyone who reads Luke's narrative with a fair knowledge of the O.T.

Some scholars have taken the idea further. A good example is the work of Goulder and Sanderson.<sup>149</sup> We shall not repeat what was described in the second chapter. What is significant for the present study is that according to this theory the very names of the figures which appear in Luke's narrative are founded upon the application of the O.T. texts.<sup>150</sup> These typologies, tied to the markedly Lucan language, lead these scholars to the conclusion that Luke's narrative is a '*pious meditation by St. Luke himself; a piece of Haggadah*', which obviously has no historical basis.<sup>151</sup>

## 5. Historical Analogies or Midrashic Creation?

It is evident that the second and third points of our present discussion are mutually exclusive with the fourth. The fact that Luke must have had the benefit of genuine Palestinian-Christian tradition from before A.D. 70 in order to so accurately describe the temple proceedings, etc. cannot be reconciled with the idea that he created the entire narrative as a pious meditation of the O.T. in accordance with Haggadic method. One of these hypotheses needs to give way.

In comparing the two hypotheses, one cannot but notice that the work of a scholar such

as Paul Winter (and before him Alfred Edersheim) depends in the main upon verifiable information, while the hypotheses of the other school are unverifiable. For instance, the Lucan description of the temple proceedings can be compared with objective data which are available from early Jewish writings. On the contrary, the theory that the name 'Zechariah' is derived from such an involved typological argument must always remain in the area of speculation. It might be replied that the Haggidic method is itself gleaned from the same early Jewish writings. This is true, and we need not doubt that the scholars of the 'typological' school have carefully studied early Jewish methods of interpretation. However, the observation of the method in Rabbinical writings, and the discovery of that method in Luke's gospel are certainly not to be equated. Further, as in the case of Matthew, this theory proves too much. The name Zechariah is derived from two involved typologies. But it seems difficult to believe that Luke would have had both of these in his mind at the same time. This immediately raises the question of whether the typologies are not more the product of the twentieth century biblical scholar, than the product of Luke's mind. R.McL. Wilson comments that here '*typology has gone mad*'.<sup>152</sup> If Laurentin is right, the names of Zechariah and Elizabeth cannot possibly be the product of Luke's typological mind because the subtle etymological allusions would similarly have to become the product of Luke's mind, and this is beyond the bounds of possibility. In addition, it is difficult to see how such a simple and life-like narrative could have been produced by such an involved mind. Benoit has pointed out that Luke's use of O.T. texts demonstrates a careful principle of selection which he regards as being motivated by the historical tradition.

The greatest weakness of this view (typological) is however the way in which the scholars who advocate it attempt to deal with the Lucan prologue. Speaking of Luke's understanding of his own work they say;

*We can be much less sure what form of inspiration St. Luke supposes himself to be receiving and indeed perhaps St. Luke was less sure himself...it may well be that he held a sophisticated theory of inspiration, and knew that he was writing symbolic truth, and nothing more, as St. John knew... Perhaps St. Luke started believing what St. Matthew believed and ended up believing what St. John believed, and never noticed the transition.*<sup>153</sup>

This hardly sounds like the mind of the man who wrote the Lucan prologue. In fact, if this theory is correct, then Luke was being dishonest. The incisive statement of James Orr still applies with equal cogency.<sup>154</sup> There is no escape from this implication.

## 6. A Structural Explanation

Does this mean that we must reject the fact that Luke's narrative corresponds to the O.T. at many points? Clearly, this need not be inferred. The dichotomy produced by these two scholarly opinions is not totally necessary. It is possible to explain the character of the Lucan narrative in a way which gives due weight to the presence of O.T. parallels and yet which does not force one to the conclusion that Luke has created the tradition. A certain biblical structure has been analysed by Gerard Meagher in his useful article on the '*Prophetic Call Narrative*'.<sup>155</sup> He takes a number of narratives in the O.T. where an individual received a divine calling and demonstrates that a basic structure is to be found which is common to them all. His research includes the calls of Gideon, Moses, Jeremiah, Abraham, Isaiah, Ezekiel and '*Deutero-Isaiah*'. The six points are as follows:

1. The divine confrontation
2. The introductory word
3. The commission
4. The objection
5. The reassurance
6. The sign<sup>156</sup>

Not every case will fit into the whole pattern. In this case the pattern would be as follows:

1. The divine confrontation - Lk. 1:11
2. The introductory word - 1:13
3. The commission - 1:14-17
4. The objection - 1:18
5. The reassurance - 1:19 (In this case touched with an element of rebuke)
6. The sign - 1:20-23; 57-66

In the case of the various O.T. figures, no one has suggested that Isaiah or Jeremiah (or their recorders-authors) had been searching for typological parallels in the calls of Abraham or Moses. Yet these callings evidence the same structure. This simply means that a particular form of narrative developed which had become traditional to the biblical writings, and that each individual had unconsciously repeated his own story in the same format. Correspondences between two call narratives at a particular point (eg. Luke 1:18 and Gen. 15:8) in no way indicates a dependence of one narrative upon the other as regards the actual subject matter itself. The great significance which the '*typological*' scholars find in many of these



parallels turn out to be of little significance. They simply show that Luke was a writer who was saturated with the O.T. scriptures. Many of his parallels may not even be conscious at all.<sup>157</sup>

It may be that he was conscious of his exercise in some measure. He obviously worked on the tradition which he had received and in a masterful way managed to draw a number of parallels with the great figures in Israel's past. We do know that the correspondences of Matthew's narrative were quite self-consciously narrated. Luke has allowed these stories to influence him in his choice of words. This however in no way denies the fact that he handled the tradition he had received with due respect.<sup>158</sup>

We conclude that there are no warrantable reasons for rejecting the substantial historicity of this narrative.

#### THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY . LUKE 1:26-38

The special problems and issues of note which we find in this pericope are as follows:

Firstly, the literary structure of the narrative is significant and requires analysis. Secondly, the language of this section needs to be analysed. Do we again find as much evidence of Hebraic influences, or is the language particularly Hellenistic? Thirdly, to what extent is the O.T. used in the narrative; does the story rely heavily upon O.T. typology? Fourthly, how is Mary's question to be understood; does verse 34 present a discordant note in the narrative? Fifthly, what does the passage teach; does it in fact teach the virginal conception of Jesus? Does it imply the sinlessness of the child to be born? Does it bear witness to the Incarnation? Is the divinity of the child implied? Sixthly, does the text give us reason to believe that Mary was also from the Davidic family and if not, how are we to regard the fatherhood of Joseph, granted that the virginal conception is taught? Lastly, how do we explain the origin of this tradition; does it come from the Hellenistic-Christian community? Does it perhaps come from Judaism or from the influence of pagan ideas upon either the church or Judaism? These issues have stimulated the minds of biblical exegets for generations. A vast amount of literature exists on the subject, which we cannot begin to deal with in the confines of an exegetical study of this nature. However, we shall have to come to some conclusions on these vital issues.

##### 1. The Structure of the Narrative

The first and most striking aspect of this pericope is the structural similarities it has with the proceeding narrative.<sup>159</sup> The parallelism is so obvious and so detailed that it becomes im-

possible to believe that this pericope and the preceeding come from a different author. Without the linguistic data, we would still have to conclude that both narratives come from the same hand. The implications of this parallelism are significant in revealing to us the intention of the author. The parallelism operates in contrast. Zechariah is told that his prayers have been answered. There was some initiative on his part before the act of God.<sup>160</sup> However, Mary is not presented with any initiative on her part whatsoever. Furthermore she is greeted with a sovereign declaration of grace; *'Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you'*. The play on the words *χαίρε κεχαριτωμένη* gives further impact to the greeting. Mary was *'troubled'* and *'considered'*. Zechariah was *'troubled'* and *'fear fell upon him'*. There is a suggestion that Mary's conscience was relatively untainted, while Zechariah is overcome by fear in the holy presence of the angel. Mary is said to have *'found favour with God'*. Zechariah is said to have received an answer to this prayer. The former speaks more of the sovereign grace of God. Mary's son will be *μεγας*. The word is not qualified, as with John, who will be *μεγας ενωπιον κυριου*.

Jesus will sit upon the eternal throne of David and will be called the *'Son of the Most High'*, while John will come as the forerunner of the Messianic age. Mary asks about the manner of the fulfilment of the angelic promise: *'How can this be?'*, while Zechariah asks for a sign in order to believe the promise at all.<sup>161</sup> Jesus is born of the Holy Spirit, while John is to be filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb. John is Spirit-filled. Jesus' very origin is of the Spirit. Mary is offered a sign which she did not request. Zechariah is chastised for the sign he demanded. Mary immediately submits to the will of God. Zechariah has to learn obedience through his chastisement. His obedience is delayed till the birth of the child. Mary's submission is immediate. Laurentin's careful examination of this contrasting structure removes the pattern from the realm of conjecture.<sup>162</sup>

We have noted how the annunciation to Zechariah follows a typical biblical pattern which has been termed the *'prophetic call narrative'*. Clearly the same conclusion follows for this narrative.<sup>163</sup> The single notable addition to the typical format is Mary's response *'Behold, I am the hand-maid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to thy word'*. While the terminology of the sentence can be found in the O.T. (Gen. 30:3,35), the way in which it appears in this context is without parallel.<sup>164</sup> This suggests that Mary's reply should certainly not be taken as an anti-climax or in any way less significant than the preceeding passage. This point will be elaborated in the next chapter.

The fact that this pericope fits so well into both the preceeding narrative and the O.T. *'call*

*narrative*', is the best reason for rejecting the interpolation hypothesis regarding 1.34. Without this verse, the structure loses a vital point. The implication is that this narrative is entirely biblical and Hebraic in its structure. The Hebraic origin of the narrative becomes a real possibility, and at least we have to maintain that the author was exceedingly well-versed in the Septuagint. We need not insist that this structuring is entirely deliberate. It is possible that an author who had been saturated in the O.T. may have unconsciously reproduced such a structure. However, this may well be an incorrect conclusion and it is as likely that he was conscious of the structure.

The fact that the structure falls within the literary genre or structural form of '*prophetic calls*' leads us to question whether Luke saw both Zechariah and Mary in a prophetic role. We would be led to this question from the narrative so far even if the Magnificat and the Benedictus were not part of the present narrative. Given their presence in the narrative, this possibility becomes an almost certain conclusion. To this we may add that Luke's infancy narrative is particularly well-endowed with references to the '*prophetic*' (Luke 2:29-35; 2:36ff). Barnes Tatum and Paul Minear have in different ways both drawn attention to the '*prophetic*' emphasis in the Lucan infancy narrative. Minear prefers to call it the '*theology of the time of fulfilment*'.<sup>165</sup> As regards the source or tradition, the parallel structure of the first two pericopes (1:5-25; 1:26-38) means that we cannot easily postulate one source for the narrative (i.e. early-Palestinian for the Annunciation to Zechariah) and another source for the other narrative (i.e. later Hellenistic-Christian for the Annunciation to Mary). It also leads us to wonder how much of the structure is due to the tradition he received. The postulation of separate sources could just be possible if the second narrative were derived from the first, i.e. if we believe that Luke worked up the second narrative on the basis of an early tradition he had received for the first narrative. This was the view of Dibelius and Vielhauer. However we have already rejected that view. The story of Christ's childhood cannot be regarded as a secondary element of the infancy narrative. This means that the theory of a Palestinian-Christian origin for the first narrative must coincide with a similar origin for the second narrative. Conceivably both narratives may be late. They may be entirely the product of Luke's artistic creation.<sup>166</sup> The structure would then be late while the content of the narrative may be early. However, it is as likely that the structure itself is early, since, as we have already noted, the structure is biblico-Hebraic.<sup>167</sup> In Paul Winter's view the parallel structure of these narratives argues against a Christian author, since a Christian author would have been unlikely to place John and Jesus in a parallel structure.<sup>168</sup> In this case the manner in which the parallel has been used (i.e. to show contrast) would be Lucan while the parallel structure itself would be Palestinian. However, it is difficult to separate the content of the tradition from its structure. The structure is woven into the very fabric of its content and the content only has meaning in this particular structure. The best solution is that both narratives, in both structural and essential content,

are the product of the early Palestinian Christian community, though Marshall is probably correct when he says that '*the present narrative cannot be settled simply by consideration of the form*'.<sup>169</sup> This subject will be discussed at greater length in the structural analysis of the infancy narratives in the following two chapters.<sup>170</sup>

## 2. Evidence of a Hebrew Source

Is the language particularly Hebraic or is it particularly Hellenistic? Does the preponderance of Lucan terminology exclude the possibility of a Hebrew source? Evidence of a Hebrew substratum has been found in Lk. 1:26, 30, 32, 35, 37, 78. They are as frequent as in the previous pericope.<sup>171</sup> We may add to these linguistic considerations the oft-quoted comment of Charles Gore on Lk. 1:32,33;

*It breathes the spirit of the Messianic hope  
before it had received the rude and crushing  
blow involved in the rejection of the  
Messiah.*<sup>172</sup>

It should be noted once more that to regard these phrases as Hebraic does not deny the fact that Luke could have also used the Septuagint as a guide in his translation or editing. If we postulate another translator between the Hebrew source and Luke the same would apply to him. This observation tends to weaken the objection which Nigel Turner has brought against Winter's arguments.<sup>173</sup>

Alongside these Hebraisms we find clear evidence of Luke's terminology.<sup>174</sup> A few phrases are Hellenistic. For instance the play on *χαίρει κεχαριτωμένη* is typically Greek (1:28). The Lucan and Hellenistic elements are so evident that we need not go to any lengths to demonstrate them. The conclusion that avoids most difficulties is to regard the Hebraic and Lucan elements as not mutually exclusive. There is evidence both of an Hebraic tradition and a Lucan redaction.<sup>175</sup> These two elements should not be opposed to each other. Our conclusion concerning the linguistic nature of this pericope confirms the conclusion we have come to on the structure of the narrative.

## 3. The Use of the O.T. and Luke's Midrashic Method

Closely related to the linguistic nature of this narrative is the use of O.T. texts. This element may lead (as it has led some) to the conclusion that the entire narrative is the result of Luke's creative skill. This needs to be investigated as much as the preceding elements.

Firstly, a number of Roman Catholic scholars see a background to the angel's greeting (1:28 and 31) in the '*daughter of Zion*' passage in Zeph. 3:14-17.<sup>176</sup> Secondly, a more advanced stage of the midrashic theory finds O.T. origins for most parts of this pericope.<sup>177</sup> Lk. 1:28a is based on Dan. 10:11,19; 1:28b on Jud. 6:12; Lk. 1:31 comes from Isa. 7:14 and Gen. 16:11f; Lk. 1:32-33 closely follows Isa. 9:6,7. Lk. 1:35 comes from Ex. 40:34 and Mary's response from 1 Sam. 1:11. Lk.1:32 is influenced by 2 Sam. 7:14. Thirdly, a more extreme form of the midrashic theory finds the starting point of the pericope in a single O.T. passage (Gen. 28:12 - 30:35) which has been midrashically interpreted.<sup>178</sup>

Regarding the third, the question that needs to be asked is whether it would be possible to use this method in any narrative section of the N.T. with equal success. If one took for instance a section of the passion narrative and placed it alongside the servant passages in Isaiah or some of the Psalms, could we not find an equal number of verbal parallels? In terms of sheer statistical probabilities and the fact that the same language tradition is to be found in both narratives one would have to answer this in the affirmative. The difficulty with this method is that when taken to these lengths it can be used to prove anything.<sup>179</sup> Any significant correspondence that does exist between the story of Jacob's dream and Luke 1:26,38 can be readily explained by the fact that Jacob's story to a certain extent partakes of the structure of the '*prophetic call narrative*'. It is not difficult to criticise this type of typologising.

The second theory is more plausible because the correspondences are at least more obvious. However its weakness lies in the fact that the more random the O.T. allusions appear to be the less is the likelihood that any single O.T. narrative has actually prompted Luke to write a story. The fact that Luke is selective in his use of O.T. texts demonstrates, as Pierre Benoit has noted, the fact that Luke cannot have been motivated by the O.T. itself.<sup>180</sup> It implies that he has been motivated by the tradition he received, and that in order to heighten the biblical character of his narrative he has used words and incidents from the sacred text of the O.T. We can in fact never be sure exactly how conscious Luke was of these allusions. A writer who was so steeped in the Septuagint as he was, may easily write in a biblical style and allude to many texts without being conscious of doing so. The same phenomenon is found in many of the N.T. epistles. One is never certain where to draw the line between conscious or semi-conscious allusions (e.g. Rom. 11:2; 1 Sam. 12:22). In this pericope we may take the reference to Isaiah 9:6,7 and 2 Sam. 7:9-16 as a conscious quotation.<sup>181</sup> The others have unequal probability.<sup>182</sup> Certainly there is no reason to undermine the historicity of the text due to these allusions.

#### 4. Mary's Strange Question

*Mary asks a question and her words have embarrassed countless commentators'.<sup>183</sup>*

The difficulty which is felt by many commentators is that nothing in the angels announcement specifically mentions an immediate conception. Mary could have assumed, quite reasonably, that she would conceive in the natural way once she had been married to Joseph. The traditional Roman Catholic view is that Mary had taken a vow of perpetual chastity and therefore had not foreseen any children at all. This raises as many difficulties as it solves and has been rightly rejected by many modern Catholic scholars.<sup>184</sup> Some commentators have postulated that the original Hebrew of 1:31 would have been in the perfect tense, which could refer either to the present or the future. The Hebrew text could have read '*And behold, you are conceiving in your womb...*'. This would remove the difficulty. However, the speculative nature of this emendation has not lent support to the theory and commentators have generally not taken it very seriously.<sup>185</sup> The only two viable solutions are, firstly, that Mary may have understood the words of the angel to apply to the immediate future, and, secondly, that Luke 1:34 is a literary device used by Luke to highlight the next angelic declaration. In deciding between these two possibilities it is noteworthy that Alfred Plummer does not even comment on this problem. He merely presumes the former explanation as the most obvious way of looking at the angel's message.<sup>186</sup> He notices the Roman Catholic idea of the vow, but makes no further comment on the problem. The explanation for this silence on his part is, we believe, the fact that the difficulty which has been felt concerning this verse has arisen as a result of the interpolation hypothesis advocated by Adolf von Harnack and Vincent Taylor. Plummer wrote before this controversy and did not feel the problem. This means that the problem has not arisen from the text as much as from the wider argument which has made use of this so-called problem in its support. It is clear from Vincent Taylor's book that he does make a great deal of this difficulty. Since then the interpolation hypothesis has fallen into disfavour. Not many recent commentators accept it and we have noted that the work of Gresham Machen put an end to this discussion to a large extent.<sup>187</sup>

It may be true then that the problem has only been felt by a certain type of mind, the kind of mind that approaches the text with a certain presumption, namely, a disbelief of the tradition of the virginal conception. Further, this type of mind disbelieves that Mary could have really had an experience of angelic revelation. When the text is regarded from a purely academic and literary point of view there may indeed be a problem but, as soon as one is prepared to accept the possibility of a revelatory experience, the problem falls away. What happens to the feelings of any ordinary human being when addressed by an angel? A non-

sensical remark is attributed to Peter when faced with a similar experience (Mk. 9:5). Further, does not the sheer drama of an angelic declaration insinuate the idea of something which is urgent and immediate? We may recall the immediate events which often followed in the O.T. when *'the word of the Lord'* came to the prophets. Given the fact that Mary's marriage may still have been a year or so in the future; given the dramatic immediacy of an angelic declaration, and given the purely human nature of Mary, there does not seem to be any reason for finding difficulty with this verse.

The second explanation: that of the literary device is quite possible.<sup>188</sup> To some minds it may be more satisfactory. There is no logical necessity of preferring it to the former explanation.

## 5. The Theological Implications of the Narrative

What does this passage teach? What are the theological implications? There are four related areas, which will be mentioned in descending order of clarity. Firstly, does it teach the virginal conception? Secondly, does it teach the sinlessness of Christ? Thirdly, does it teach the divinity of Christ? Fourthly, does it teach the Incarnation?

### The Virginal Conception

Joseph A. Fitzmyer has seriously suggested that if we strip our minds of the Matthean infancy narrative there is no reason to conclude that this passage definitely teaches a virginal conception.<sup>189</sup> He accepts that various points may militate against this view. Firstly Mary's question indicates that the conception took place before marriage. His reply is to quote the interpretation of J. M. Creed, which we have referred to, that Luke 1:34 is a *'literary device'* on the part of Luke.<sup>190</sup> Conceivably the original tradition may not have contained these words. Secondly, the angelic declaration that *'the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you'* has been taken to teach the virginal conception. He replies that the language is highly figurative and that neither *επελευσεται* nor *επισκιασε* have any connotation of conception, let alone sexual implications. These words do not exclude the virginal conception, but neither do they clearly affirm it. Thirdly, Luke 2:5 affirms the virginity of Mary while she was expecting. Fourthly, Luke 3:23 (*'as was supposed'*) implies the virginal conception. To the latter two he proposes a textual error or scribal gloss.

It must be said in support of Fitzmyer that he has rightly shown that the virginal conception is not central to the infancy narrative, and neither is it the vital part of the angel's message. It is to his credit that as a Roman Catholic he has had the honesty to say this while many

Protestants still emphasise the virgin birth as a 'central' part of this narrative. Luke did not emphasise it. However, it seems to us that Luke most certainly did assume it, and consequently his narrative definitely implies it.

Raymond Brown, whose initial article prompted Fitzmyer to write his views, dissociates himself from Fitzmyer's view. He replies that Luke 3:23 indicates that Luke did not think that Joseph begot Jesus after the angel's annunciation to Mary. Further he argues that in view of the parallel and contrast drawn between John and Jesus, the fact that John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb implies that Jesus' birth was a greater miracle, and this indicates that Luke did believe in the virginal conception. Added to this is the praise given to Mary for her faith in contradistinction to the chastisement of Zechariah for his unbelief. If all Mary believed was that she would give birth in the normal way to the Messiah it is not apparent why she should be praised for her faith.<sup>191</sup> We have drawn attention to this contrasting parallelism already, and when the entire picture is taken together it is indeed very difficult to accept that Luke did not intend to narrate the virginal conception. Further, Fitzmyer has not seen all the problems. He resorts to a textual insertion in Luke 2:5 and 3:23. He does not notice that Luke 1:27 twice repeats the fact that Mary was a virgin.<sup>192</sup> This seems to be a preparation for the message which the angel is about to bring. Then in 1:36 Mary is given a sign to believe. In the O.T. a 'sign' need not always imply an unnatural event. However, Mary is given a sign in order to encourage her faith.

Now it does not seem to be logical that her faith must be encouraged if her experience was to be the same as Elizabeth. In fact, given an ordinary conception, her experience is of a lesser order than Elizabeth's, because Elizabeth was old. The sign given to encourage Mary's faith indicates that Mary was to experience something of greater magnitude, and since Elizabeth already had an unusual conception, Mary's must be a miraculous conception.<sup>193</sup>

We have already argued against the interpolation hypothesis, and we have also shown that the idea of a literary device is not necessary in the case of Luke 1:34. This removes Fitzmyer's reasons for rejecting this verse, and if it is left to stand Luke clearly implies the virginal conception.

Lastly, Fitzmyer believes that Luke 1:35 need not teach the virginal conception. Granted, this may be so. However, when this verse is seen in context, i.e. in the contrasting parallelism of the two annunciations, then it certainly does imply a virginal conception. This is very much in line with what Raymond Brown has indicated. We conclude that the virginal conception is assumed by Luke. We do not conclude that it is staunchly advocated by Luke. Rather, he seems to write as if it were common knowledge in the Christian community.



## The Sinlessness of Christ.

It is often argued by those who deny the doctrinal importance of the virgin birth that the N.T. nowhere connects Christ's sinlessness with the virgin birth. This point was forcibly made by Paul Lobstein.<sup>194</sup> Our argument here should not be taken to mean that the virgin birth is a central doctrine. It is not. However, it is taught in the N.T. and in this particular passage it does, we believe, imply the sinlessness of Christ, or perhaps it would be better to say that the virginal conception (rather than birth) implies his holiness (rather than sinlessness). The verse in question is Luke 1:35. It is not certain exactly how this verse should be construed. If κληθηθῆται is taken with υἱος Θεου then it would read *'The holy thing which shall be born shall be called the Son of God'*. If κληθησεται is taken with αγιον then it would read *'that which shall be born shall be called holy, the Son of God'*.<sup>195</sup>

One of the reasons for taking the former is that αγιον does not seem to be a title. But this is questionable. The *'Holy One'* was a common appellation for the Messiah in pre-Christian Judaism.<sup>196</sup> The latter is to be preferred not only because *'Holy One'* could be used as a title. In Luke 2:23 Luke inserts the word *'Holy'* into the text he quotes from the O.T. (Ex. 13:2,12; Num. 3:13). This indicates that he laid stress upon this word. Further, as Plummer has shown, in all other cases when κληθησεται is used in this construction, the appellation precedes the verb.<sup>197</sup> This, together with the force of διο and the correspondence between πνευμα αγιον and αγιον κληθησεται demonstrates that the holiness of the child is derived from the manner of the conception.<sup>198</sup> Plummer remarks, *'the unborn child is called αγιον as being free from all taint of sin'*.<sup>199</sup> Two considerations may be used to weaken this implication. Firstly, if *'Holy One'* is a Messianic title, the emphasis is more on the title than on the moral state of the person so called. But what then is the meaning of the title in the first place, if it does not imply holiness? Granted that the title may not have been used to connote sinlessness, it was used to connote holiness, and in this particular construction, with the emphasis upon the word *'Holy'*, and the mention of the supernatural birth, the Messianic title is stretched beyond its common context. Secondly, it may be said that the πνευμα αγιον in this verse does not connote the third Person of the Trinity, as in later dogmatic formulations of the church. This is certainly correct. As most commentators point out, the concept of the Holy Spirit here does not go beyond the O.T. conception of the creative power of God. But again, why did the Hebrews use the term at all, and why does Luke use it, if he does not mean that God's Spirit is holy? We conclude that this passage does teach the moral holiness of Jesus, and that holiness is said to be a direct result of the virginal conception by the Holy Spirit.

## The Divinity of Christ

The fact that *αγιον* should probably be taken with *κληθησεται* does not weaken the force of the following phrase *υιος Θεου*. *Therefore the child will be called holy, the Son of God*. This last phrase is no less derived from the *therefore* (*δω*), it simply acts as a further explanation of the former part of the verse, *The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will over-shadow you*. His divine Sonship is also then the implication of the virginal conception by the Holy Spirit. It must be emphasised that in both these points the motivating element is the Holy Spirit rather than the virginal conception. The virginal conception happens to be one of the implications of this passage. The driving force behind it is the work of the Holy Spirit. That work is qualified in a definite sense by the parallel *δυναμις υψιστου*. As most commentators point out, this would be a reference to the Shekinah that hovered over the Tabernacle in the wilderness and which filled Solomon's temple. The idea is that just as the theophany overshadowed (*επισκιασει*) the tabernacle so that God was in the midst of his people (Ex. 25:8; 40:43), so the glory of God will make the womb of Mary its dwelling place.<sup>200</sup> The result of this overshadowing will be the *υιος Θεου*. Corresponding to this is the unqualified *μεγας* of 1:32.<sup>201</sup> Add to this the deliberate contrast with *μεγας ενωπιον κυριου* (1:15) and it is not possible to avoid Luke's implication. This child is 'son' in a unique way, in a sense that places him more on the side of God than of man.<sup>202</sup> This is not all Luke says. Three phrases need to be understood together; *υιος υψιστου* (vs. 32) must be connected with *δυναμις υψιστου* which as we have already seen, is parallel to *πνευμα αγιον* (vs. 34). There is therefore a link between *υιος υψιστου* and *πνευμα* which cannot be missed. The *δυναμις* and the *πνευμα* are 'of God' in the sense that they belong to the very nature of God. *Υιος υψιστου* must also be connected with the *προφητης υψιστου* (1:76) who goes before the Lord (*κυριου*). Again one can scarcely miss the implication of Luke's thought. In 1:16,17 this 'prophet' must go before the *κυριον του Θεου*. Jesus is equated with the Lord God whom Elijah must precede. There is also an allusion to Isa. 40:3 where the prophet prepares the way for the Lord. Luke's identification of Jesus with *κυριος* is found again in 1:43 and 2:11. Thus while it is true that *υιος Θεος* can be used to denote sonship in an analogical sense (as in Ps. 2:7) in this particular context it has unmistakable connotations of the divinity of the Son.<sup>203</sup>

## The Incarnation

Does this passage refer to the Incarnation? If by this term we mean an explicit reference to the pre-existence of the Logos then the answer is clearly NO. The infancy narratives show no signs of the later dogmatic development of the church into Trinitarian theology. Incidentally, a reasonable deduction from this is that the infancy narratives are earlier than Jo-

hannine theology. If by Incarnation we mean that God came to be with man in Jesus Christ, then this passage certainly teaches the Incarnation. We have already noticed that the *ἐπελευσεται* of 1:35 recalls the theophany of the Mosaic tabernacle. God would come down and make the virgin's womb a dwelling place and therefore the son would be called holy, the Son of God. This is the equivalent of Matthew's use of *'Emmanuel'*. The identity of God's act in the person of Jesus is thought of here more in the context of eschatology than of ontology. This dissociates the teaching of the infancy narrative from the idea of pre-existence and the eternal generation of the Son in later Trinitarian theology. However, the eschatological notion of God active in Jesus Christ is, according to Wolfhart Pannenberg, the true basis of the divinity of Christ and the basis of the theology of the Incarnation.<sup>204</sup> In this sense we may say that the Incarnation remains just submerged in Luke's narrative. It would be too much to say that it has been specifically stated.

## 6. Mary's Davidic Descent?

Those who hold to the Davidic descent of Mary usually base their belief on Luke 1:27. Commentators differ as to the construction of this verse. The earlier commentators leave the way open for this interpretation. Plummer believes that *'it is unnecessary, and indeed impossible, to decide whether these words go with ἀνδρι, or with παρθενον or both'* (i.e. *ἐξ οίκου Δαυιδ*).<sup>205</sup> However, J.M. Creed totally rejects it. *'The order of the words in the sentence forbids the interpretation of Origen who wishes to attach ἐξ οίκου Δαυιδ to παρθενον'*. He is prepared to allow the possibility of Mary's Davidic descent. *'Of course it might be supposed without inconsistency that Mary was in reality of Davidic descent on her father's side and was related to Elizabeth by her mother'*.<sup>206</sup> Conservative scholars have often quoted Luke 1:32 (*θρόνον Δαυιδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ*) 1.69 and 2.5 in support of this. This certainly remains a possibility. But it can never become a certainty and it would be better not to place any weight upon it.<sup>207</sup> If Mary was not of Davidic descent, and if we accept the virginal conception, what becomes of the phrase just quoted? (Lk. 1:32). This will always remain a problem for modern minds who have not been conditioned by the biblical and Jewish forms of thought. Whether it is really a problem given that environment of thought is another question. The most basic question which lies at the bottom of this problem is whether God should or can accommodate himself to a particular environment at a particular time. If he does, and can, then the adoptive Davidic sonship of Jesus is quite acceptable. The view advocated by Gresham Machen remains the best solution; that Jesus was Joseph's adopted son in a sense which went deeper than ordinary adoption because in other cases the child would have a living human father. In the case of Jesus this was not so. Joseph was the only man who Jesus could look to as a father. Can a child be more dependent upon a father than that? The only difference between such a relationship and ordinary generation is one of genetics. Socially, legally, morally and emotionally,

Jesus was Joseph's son as any child is the son of its father. Whether God's accommodation to the Jewish legal understanding of adoption at the same time fulfilled an inner necessity which exists between the virginal conception and the Incarnation is not really a question we can ever answer. As James Orr pointed out, we need not understand these issues before we can rationally assent to them.<sup>208</sup> This problem does, however, remain in the sense that the origin of the tradition of the virginal conception becomes very difficult to explain if it did not arise from an historical event. How those who were looking eagerly for the redemption of Israel from a specifically Davidic Messiah could create the idea of an adopted Davidic Messiah remains an insoluble question.

## 7. The Origin of the Tradition of the Virginal Conception

How did the tradition of the virginal conception originate? This is the question which responsible historians have to answer rather than '*was Jesus born of the virgin Mary?*' The latter question can never be answered with certainty from a historical point of view, while the former question may in fact lead to a degree of probability which becomes an answer (not the answer) to the latter question.

We may safely say that the older attempts to explain this tradition have now been rejected by the majority of scholars, or so modified as to become a different explanation altogether. It was often asserted that the tradition was incorporated into the early church from pagan mythology. This view of direct incorporation is no longer tenable. The thorough and exhaustive work of Thomas Boslooper cannot be lightly dismissed.<sup>209</sup> It was also sometimes argued that Jewish belief could have produced the idea of the virginal conception. Much use was made of the Philonic writings. But there is absolutely no evidence of this idea in pre-Christian Judaism. Allen accepted the possibility of Isaiah being influenced by Canaanite ideas.<sup>210</sup> More recently the excavation of the Nikkal Poem at Ras Shamra has led to a scholarly debate which may have implications for an O.T. understanding of virgin births.<sup>211</sup> But such possibilities are, at the best, tenuous. So far there can be no concrete evidence of the idea in pre-Christian Judaism. The Canaanite beliefs referred to by the above scholars were in any event long before the N.T. period. The idea of direct influence from Judaism has therefore also been rejected by the majority of scholars.

The view that is held to by most today is the indirect influence of pagan ideas upon Christianity and the theory of Christian origin. There are basically two hypotheses. The one is advocated mostly by theologians. Here the operative word is '*theologumemon*', which is not always clearly defined.<sup>212</sup> Basically the idea is that the belief developed through faith seeking an explanation of the events which confronted it. The resurrection and the Incar-

nation were first experienced by the church as revelation. The resultant faith began to demand the idea of the virgin birth.

The other view is mostly advocated by anthropologists (though Thomas Boslooper and those involved in this study of comparative religion may be included). This is the hypothesis that the environment of the early Christian community somehow produced this belief. Various reasons are given for this production. The final conclusion as to the historical origins of this tradition can only be made at the end of this chapter when the historical value of the infancy narratives in general will be discussed.<sup>213</sup>

The fundamental problem with the theologumenal hypothesis is one of dating. Its advocates rely upon the argument from silence to show that the idea of the virgin birth is not an integral part of N.T. theology. They must set the date of the origin of this theologumenon sufficiently later than the period of the primitive church in Jerusalem to exclude the possibility of family tradition. But this excludes the origin of the idea from most of the first century, if embarrassing questions are to be avoided. This in turn destroys the hypothesis itself because the infancy narratives must be dated well within the first century. The difficulties involved in accepting this hypothesis make it easy, or perhaps easier, to accept the traditional explanation of the origin of this tradition.<sup>214</sup>

The anthropological theory suffers from its irrelevance. The evidence that is forthcoming from various anthropological sources has no real connection with the N.T. understanding of virginal conception. This is admitted by many of the anthropologists themselves.<sup>215</sup>

If we must reject various attempts that have been made to account for the origin of the tradition of the virginal conception of Jesus, does this mean that we can now accept the traditional interpretation of this subject? At the present the most we can say is that non-tradition approaches have failed. If the traditional view is also found to be without sufficient support, we will have to conclude that historical criticism cannot account for the origins of the tradition. The validity of the traditional approach can only be discussed once we have completed our critical examination of the infancy narratives.

## THE MEETING OF THE TWO MOTHERS. LK. 1:39-56

### 1. Luke's literary-theological device

The narrative part of this section is often regarded as a literary-theological device on the part of Luke to show the subordination of John to Jesus. Thus John's mother salutes Jesus' mother and John himself, while still in the womb, begins to herald the coming of

the Messiah.<sup>216</sup> There can be no doubt that Luke has written this narrative in order to show the special significance of this event. That does not however rule out its historicity, which must be tested on other grounds.<sup>217</sup>

## 2. Evidence of a Hebrew Source

In this regard it is significant that scholars have continued to find evidence of Hebraisms in this section no less than in the others. Thus for instance Paul Winter believes that *την ορεωην* in 1:39, which remains a difficulty for commentators and translators, is to be explained by the underlying Hebrew. The Hebrew term is found for instance in Jos. 10:40 and 11:16.<sup>218</sup> Then in 1:42 *Ευλογημενη συ εν γυναιξιν* is noted as a Hebraism by Plummer.<sup>219</sup> Also notable is Plummer's contention that Elizabeth's greeting (1:42-45) is clearly marked with the characteristics of Hebrew poetry. He sets the Greek text out in verse and proposes that the translations of Greek into various languages should have this section in verse form as much as Lk. 1:46-55; 68-79; 2:14 and 2:29-32; 34-35.<sup>220</sup> This suggestion has been taken up by J. Norval Geldenhuys and Raymond Brown.<sup>221</sup> Her statement is certainly introduced as forcibly as the other songs (compare 1:41b-42 with 1:46; 67; 2:13; 28).<sup>222</sup> The introduction is markedly similar to the utterance of Zechariah (1:41; 1:67) and may suggest that Luke deliberately introduced the prophetic utterance of John's parents in the same way. If this suggestion has any merit, it would have important implications for the textual debate over 1:46. The Magnificat has impressed the majority of scholars with its Hebraic colouring. Paul Winter has actually attempted to reconstruct the Hebrew text. He regards 1.51 as a special case where the Greek seems to express an underlying Hebrew text.<sup>233</sup> Rene Laurentin finds the greatest number of his etymological allusions in the Magnificat.<sup>224</sup> The idea of the child leaping in the womb in an act of praise is also typically Jewish. Rabbi Gamaliel deduced from Ps. 68:27 that the unborn children sang in praises while the Israelites crossed the Red Sea.<sup>225</sup>

## 3. The Use of the O.T. and Luke's Midrashic Method

As against these Hebraic elements which tend to indicate a Palestinian origin, various scholars have found typological motives in Luke's narrative. For Goulder and Sanderson, the leaping of John to meet Jesus, the new Israel, is based upon the fact that the twins leapt in Rebekah's womb before the birth of Israel (Gen.25:22). The journey to a 'city of Judah' is based upon David's journey to a 'city of Judah' in order to be hailed king (1 Sam. 2:1). Thus the unborn Messiah is already hailed as king by Elizabeth and the unborn John. W.R.F.

Browning finds the source of Luke's narrative in the story of David taking the ark up to Jerusalem in 2 Sam. 6. Mary becomes the ark in which the glory of God dwells, and just as the Israelites held festivities every year in commemoration of the coronation of Jahweh and David his servant, so Jesus is carried up to Jerusalem to be greeted by Elizabeth.<sup>226</sup> In continuation of his particular theory, C.T. Ruddick compares Mary, 'arising' and going to the hill country, to Jacob's journey to the East (Gen. 29:1). Just as Elizabeth greets Mary and blesses the fruit of her womb so Jacob is warmly greeted (Gen. 29:4f) and Rachel is 'deprived' of the fruit of her womb (Gen. 30:2). Elizabeth exclaims, 'blessed is she who believed' and Leah says, 'Blessed am I' (Gen. 30:13).<sup>227</sup>

The difficulties of these theories have already been mentioned. Once again the journey to Judea is compared to three different O.T. journeys, (Jacob's, David's and the Ark's) by three scholars using the same method of interpretation. Did Luke have all these in mind? If not, is one of these theories right and the others wrong, or are they all wrong because the method is wrong? The latter seems to be indicated. The suggestion which may just be possible is the one made by Browning, but W.J. Harrington, who takes note of it, declares that this interpretation 'must remain doubtful'.<sup>228</sup>

There does not seem to be any reason for rejecting the historicity of this occurrence. If Luke is being true to his general historiographical method, he would not have invented a whole scene, though he has of course drawn out the significance of certain elements. Many scholars take *μητηρ του κυριου μου* in 1:43 to be a Lucan redaction. This may well be so, though we cannot rule out prediction on a priori grounds if we are prepared to allow for the reality of prophetic inspiration. It is true that Luke is particularly inclined to equate *κυριως* with Jesus, though this has sometimes been over-emphasised.<sup>229</sup>

#### 4. The Ascription of the Magnificat

The ascription of the Magnificat to either Mary or Elizabeth has a long history of scholarly debate. It is not within the scope of this study to deal thoroughly with this question. The fundamental arguments will be mentioned. The Magnificat has a strong resemblance to the song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10). Elizabeth's situation is more in keeping with that of Hannah than Mary's. *Ταπεινωσω* in 1:48 would seem to describe Elizabeth better than Mary. Zechariah's prophecies in 1:67f. It would fit the pattern of Luke's narrative far better if his wife gives utterance to the other Lucan hymn. In vs. 56 *Εμειπεν δε Μαριαμ σου αυτη* would follow better from 1:46 if Elizabeth was mentioned in 1:46. The repetition of 'Mary' is unnatural. The *απο του νυν* of 1:48 would make better sense if it referred to the first movement of the child felt in Hannah's womb. In Luke's infancy narrative

Mary is portrayed as quiet and pensive. This prophetic utterance does not suit her character.<sup>230</sup> In favour of the traditional reading is firstly the overwhelming textual evidence.<sup>231</sup> Secondly, as opposed to referring *ταπεινωσις* to Elizabeth, it may be argued that *δουλης* (vs. 48) alludes to *δουλη* in vs. 38. Against the argument from vs. 56 is the fact that vs. 45 is very difficult to understand in conjunction with 'Elizabeth'. Would Elizabeth suddenly begin to exalt in her own victory immediately after drawing all the attention to Mary? Further, if 1:42-45 is poetic, as Plummer maintains, then Elizabeth has already been attributed with a prophetic utterance. Finally, if Rene Laurentin is correct, the allusion to Mary and Jesus in vs. 46-67 conclusively establishes Mary as the speaker. It seems best therefore to accept the traditional reading, although no argument will ever be final in this type of discussion.<sup>232</sup>

### 5. Lucan Authorship of the Magnificat

Scholarly comment on the Magnificat is as extensive as the history of the textual issue. Our main interest in the discussion is whether the Magnificat can be attributed entirely to Luke or whether it reflects an earlier Palestinian-Christian or Jewish source. The great majority of scholars have traditionally taken the latter to be the obvious case. More recently however more scholars have been inclined to follow Adolf von Harnack in attributing the authorship to Luke himself, who is said to have deliberately imitated the Septuagint. So far in this study we have substantially accepted Harnack's work on the Lucan authorship of the extant infancy narrative. At this point we must point out that there are serious weaknesses in his position when it comes to the Magnificat. Here, if anywhere, his hypothesis fails to carry weight; so that while we may accept his findings elsewhere, it is not possible to follow him here as well.<sup>233</sup> It is unfortunate that subsequent commentators have usually replied heavily upon Harnack without always being aware of the limitations which were found in the remainder of his study. In the prose section of Lk. 1-2 his study was substantiated. However, more stringent tests revealed that his thesis could not be followed in the Magnificat as well. One notable exception amongst the modern scholars who have relied on Harnack is Pierre Benoit. He holds strongly to the Lucan authorship of Lk. 1-2, but not to the Benedictus. This he believes may derive from a Hebrew source. Benoit's position is probably due to the fact that he has made an independent study of the linguistic content of Lk. 1-2.<sup>234</sup>

The Lucan authorship of the Magnificat cannot be demonstrated. Lucan editorship cannot be rejected either. If we add this negative conclusion as to the so-called Lucanisms of the Magnificat to the possibility of a number of Hebrew etymological allusions as indicated by Rene Laurentin, the Hebraic origin of the Magnificat becomes a real possibility. This conclusion depends so far upon the linguistic nature of this psalm alone. When this is



combined with the other general characteristics of this psalm, the hypothesis of a Hebrew original becomes almost certain.<sup>235</sup>

## 6. The Origin of the Magnificat

In recent years more and more information has become available on the psalmography of post-exilic Judaism. As a result of this information it is no longer possible to maintain that first century Jews could not compose psalms in Hebrew. It has become clear that this was in fact a regular habit, as such Hebrew songs were often used in synagogue worship. The psalms of Solomon, which are found in Greek, were probably written in Hebrew. The Lucan psalms show a number of marked similarities with the Psalms of Solomon.<sup>236</sup> Further, the Magnificat evidences the typical poetic characteristics of the Hebrew psalms of the post-exilic period. This has been recognised by many scholars since the work of Herman Gunkel.<sup>237</sup> Added to the poetic characteristics of the Magnificat, is the significance of its content. It is remarkably free of Christian ideas. Nothing can be found which is specifically Christian. The lifting of the poor and the scattering of the proud is an idea which was common in pre-Christian and first century Judaism. The emphasis of the psalms falls more upon Israel and the posterity of Abraham than on the church of Jesus Christ. These characteristics are enough to demonstrate the Jewish-Palestinian origin of the Magnificat. One question remains. Is it Jewish-Christian Palestinian or purely Jewish-Palestinian? A number of scholars following Gunkel have taken the latter as the best explanation. We have already mentioned Paul Winter's hypothesis on Maccabean battle hymns.<sup>238</sup> This question has been thoroughly examined by Douglas Jones. He states his position as follows;

*The conclusion will emerge that the three psalms. (i.e. Magnificat, Benedictus and Nunc Dimitus) betray striking similarities to one another, in their use of the O.T., in their echoes of the LXX, in their relation to later Jewish psalmography, in purpose and character, and they are Christian-Jewish, not Jewish. Nevertheless they are more easily understood as composed originally in Hebrew, rather than in Greek.<sup>239</sup>*

He has examined the Benedictus and the Nunc Dimitus in the same manner. His rather detailed work will not be repeated here. The following common characteristics are to be found:

1. Much use is made of the O.T., but there is never direct quoting. Elements of particular psalms (III, 107 and 98 Septuagint) are scattered throughout the Lucan hymns:

2. The Lucan psalms show an acquaintance with the thought world expressed in the Testament of the XII Patriarchs, the Qumran writings and the Psalms of Solomon. The author was completely at home in a thoroughly Hebraic environment.
3. They celebrate the fulfilment of the salvation-event. The vocabulary is limited to the O.T., but conceptually the thought goes further. Salvation is no longer looked for. It has come. The fulfilment of the law and the prophets has occurred. There is a strong sense of joy. This indicates that these are Christian psalms. No post-exilic Jew would have thought like this.
4. They are structured around a secondary and individual personality. The individual is secondary to the Messianic fulfilment, but otherwise is central. Here it is interesting that in post-exilic psalmography the individual psalm of thanksgiving predominated. There is evidence that amongst the Therapeutae and the Qumran covenanters psalms were often composed by individuals and sung in the meeting of the brethren.
5. They are the product of a highly developed tradition of psalmography. The O.T. words and phrases are never borrowed as quotations. They are so well digested and worked together that the final product has a form and unity of its own;

*The actual words and phrases of the canonical psalms are so freshly minted in new combinations that they look like quotations.*<sup>240</sup>

These conclusions lead Douglas Jones to suggest two possible settings for the Lucan psalms. Either they must be placed in their original Lucan setting, or in the worship of the earliest community of Jewish Christians. He is inclined to accept the latter because he feels the highly developed nature of these psalms would not suggest the spontaneous circumstances suggested by Luke.

A last point needs to be discussed. Some of the scholars who advocate an early Palestinian-Christian and Hebrew origin for the Magnificat find it necessary to regard certain phrases as redactional. Is this a necessary conclusion, or does the present Lucan text show evidence of a poetic unity? Douglas Jones' linguistic examination of the Magnificat has been matched by a thorough examination of the poetic composition by Robert C. Tannehill, who builds upon the work of Douglas Jones.<sup>241</sup>

Three things stand out from Tannehill's examination. Firstly, although the poetic structure

in its present form depends upon the Greek language at many points, the poetic form itself is Hebraic. Secondly, the poem moves dynamically from the particular to the universal. The thought is gradually expanded from the child's mother to God's dealings with men in his mercy from generation to generation. It moves from God's social revolution to the final eschatological reversal.

*Thus the mighty God's regard for a humble woman becomes the sign of God's eschatological act for the world. In that small event this greater event lies hidden.*

Thirdly, there is the organic unity;

*A text which contains such careful patterns of repetition and contrast, is striving for the organic unity of literary art, a unity which causes the various parts of the text to interact so that one phrase enforces another and deepens its meaning. The text's truth is inseparable from the tensive unity of its poetic language. We lose that truth when we ignore the text's form and dissolve this tension.<sup>242</sup>*

In the light of this last point attempts to amend the text should be resisted. The present text of the Greek poem has a unity of its own. The second point which Tannehill has made could be an answer to Douglas Jones when he does not feel that the Magnificat really fits into the spontaneous situation suggested by Luke. Noticably Tannehill also draws attention to the poetic art of this psalm. The tension between the individual and the universal and the way in which the individual mother operates as a sign of God's eschatological event would lead to the conclusion that the psalm fits very well into the situation suggested by Luke. In support of this is J. Massingberde Ford's recent article arguing for strong Zealot influence in the Lucan infancy narrative. Many of her arguments are admittedly speculative. However, she has argued persuasively enough for us to accept a pneumatic enthusiastic Zealot community as a very possible Sitz im Leben for the Lucan prophecies (i.e. canticles.) While such a historical setting can never be proved, her work has shown that we can no longer reject the Lucan account out of hand. If an enthusiastic, prophetic and pneumatic movement, alive with Messianic expectations, did exist during the rough period of Herod's death, as she suggests, then we have a very likely historical setting which makes Luke's account quite intelligible.<sup>243</sup>

These observations show that there are no good reasons for rejecting this setting, unless of course one cannot believe in such a thing as a spontaneous prophetic utterance. Such a scepticism is unwarranted in this present age, where the rediscovery of the 'charismatic'

element of Christian worship is becoming common-place in many countries. This is not the right place to include a study of such phenomena, but the phenomenon of 'prophecy' in the modern movement of spiritual renewal in the churches may prove to be the best way of understanding the *Sitz im Leben* of the Lucan psalms. One wonders if a great deal of scholarly argumentation on such passages of scripture is not evidence of the poverty of the experience of the Christian church since the first century.<sup>244</sup> It may be added that if Rene Laurentin's theory is correct, then it becomes impossible to regard these hymns as a secondary addition to the narrative.<sup>245</sup>

## THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. Lk. 1:57-80

### 1. Critical Problems in the Narrative

The naming of the child at circumcision presents a problem. So far there is no concrete evidence from the first century to show that the name was given at the circumcision of the child, except for this passage in Luke. Such evidence as does exist for the Jewish habit comes from the eighth century A.D.<sup>246</sup> The habit is reflected in similar practices amongst Greeks. Some scholars have deduced that Luke has read his own ideas into the story. This is probably going too far. As Paul Winters has shown, this passage is an excellent reflection of Jewish habits concerning the naming of the child.<sup>247</sup> The gathering of the neighbours and the 'fête' of rejoicing is typical of ancient Jewish practice. Secondly, the Greek practice is not exactly the same. The child could be named seven or ten days after birth.<sup>248</sup> The eighth day here reflects a Jewish practice (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3).<sup>249</sup> Thirdly, while there is no other first century practice to attest the conjunction of the naming and the circumcision there is no evidence to show that this was impossible. Our present knowledge does not permit dogmatism.<sup>250</sup>

A further problem which exercises some scholars, but which seems a little strange, is the supposed fact that according to this narrative Elizabeth also received a revelation of the child's name. This is what caused the whole affair to be a 'marvel' (1:63). The story then appears to have a strongly legendary character. *The story loses all point if we imagine that Elizabeth and Zachariah had arranged the matter previously*.<sup>251</sup> This is hardly a necessary interpretation. The marvel was not that Elizabeth knew the name, but that the name was John rather than Zechariah. This is made quite clear by the text; 'και εθαυμασαν παντες' follows directly after Zechariah's emphatic 'Ιωαννης εστω ονομα αυτον'. Further, if Zechariah could write messages on that occasion, it is hardly likely that no communication on

this vital subject had taken place between him and Elizabeth during the last nine months when both were in retirement from ordinary life (see 1:23 and 24-25). One has to presume the story to be devoid of historical reality in order to make this kind of deduction in the first place.<sup>252</sup>

A further problem for some is the fact that vs. 62 seems to suggest that Zechariah was deaf as well as dumb. Plummer feels, *'the question is not worth the amount of discussion which it has received.'*<sup>253</sup> J. Weiss did not agree. This addition is *'a false trait which would readily occur in a popular story.'*<sup>254</sup> To this it may be replied firstly that *ενενεον* (vs. 62) need not indicate deafness. One may notice how it is used in Jn. 13:24 and especially in Acts 24:10. Secondly, *κωφος* in vs 22 can indicate deafness as well as dumbness, thus removing the *'addition'* of vs. 62.<sup>255</sup>

In line with the idea of Elizabeth's so-called revelation being the marvel of this passage, many scholars regard this section as a mere addition to the *'marvellous'* revelation of the angel to Zechariah. He had his revelation. Now his wife must have her revelation. Hence the whole narrative is *'marvellous'*.<sup>256</sup>

However, Elizabeth had no revelation and her part is certainly not the centre of this narrative. The text makes it quite clear that the all-important point was the name *'John'* which was given in the place of the father's name. The name, *'God is gracious'* is very much part of the whole message of Luke's infancy narrative. Laurentin's work on the way these names may have formed an important part of the narrative tends to support this.

Only two Hebraisms have been detected by scholars in this prose narrative. The idea of Elizabeth's *'day being fulfilled'* (*επλησθη* - vs. 57), and the use of *ρηματα* for *'things'* (vs 65) is Hebraic.<sup>257</sup>

It is possible to deduce that Luke's influence is more strongly felt in this passage than usual, although its brevity would prevent us from any degree of certainty.

## 2. The Origin of the Benedictus

Literature on the Benedictus is perhaps even more profuse than on the Magnificat. As with the Magnificat our first task is to examine the possibility of Lucan authorship as advocated by Harnack and those who follow him. Our other task is to examine the use of the Septuagint, the possible dependence or similarities with intertestamental Judaistic psalmography, and the existence of an underlying Hebrew text.<sup>258</sup>

The results of such an investigation are as follows:

1. There is just enough Lucan terminology to prove Lucan editorship, but not Lucan authorship.
2. The frequent contacts with the literature of later Judaism forbids us to regard the psalms as an imitation of the Septuagint. The author must have been at home in the language and thought-forms of first century Palestinian Judaism.
3. There are enough hints at a Hebrew substratum to make the theory of an Hebrew original quite probable.
4. The use of Christian ideas and the emphasis on eschatological and Messianic fulfilment forbids one to define this hymn as purely Jewish.
5. The sacerdotal element in the psalm makes an origin in a priestly environment quite possible.<sup>259</sup>

These characteristics demonstrate that the psalm is at least early Jewish-Christian in origin and the setting which Luke gives cannot be rejected on any objective grounds. In saying this we do, of course, take into account the fact that in the present narrative these hymns are clearly inserted. This is best explained by the hypothesis of two stages of Luke's editorial activity.<sup>260</sup> Beyond this N.T. criticism can only enter into the realm of either faith or speculation.

## THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST. LK. 2:1-20

### 1. The Census

The main questions of discussion about Luke's statement in 2:1-4 are well summarised

by J. Norval Geldenhuys:

1. Is there enough evidence to accept the fact of an imperial census for the whole empire in the time of Caesar Augustus?
2. Would a Roman enrollment call upon residents to travel to their native home?
3. Could a Roman census be held in Palestine under the reign of Herod?
4. Was not the first census, mentioned by Josephus, taken in A.D. 6-7?
5. What evidence is there that Quirinius held a position in Syria before B.C.4 ? <sup>261</sup>

Before the work of Sir William Ramsay most of these issues led to a negative estimation of Luke's accuracy. Ramsay's work, as we have already mentioned, advocates the following solution:

1. There is clear evidence of a fourteen yearly system of census inaugurated by Augustus for the whole empire. The first one probably took place in B.C. 10-9.
2. The situation in Palestine would have led the authorities to conduct the census according to the customs of the Jews. Documents used in Egypt show that people had to travel to their ancestral homes in that country at least.
3. The taking of an oath to Caesar in Palestine under the reign of Herod indicates that his position was one of vassalship. The taxation of Judea to Rome also indicates this subservience, and it is quite evident that Herod's relationship with Augustus had deteriorated during this time.
4. The first census need not have been the one in A.D. 6-7. Luke is aware of that Census himself (Acts 5:37). The fact that the Jews rebelled in A.D. 6-7 may simply indicate that this was the first census conducted in Roman style.
5. There is a possibility that Quirinius held a special position in Syria between B.C. 8-6 and he may have been in charge of the administration of the census. <sup>262</sup>

Ramsay's work helped to swing general scholarly opinion in favour of Luke's accuracy. The question which now arises is whether that position has been maintained, or has subsequent scholarship reversed Ramsay's work? The answers to this question are unfortunately diverse.

An examination of recent research leads to the unsatisfying belief that despite the temptation to come down either in favour of Lucan accuracy or against Lucan accuracy it seems that we are not permitted by the present state of discussion to come to a de-

finite conclusion.<sup>263</sup> We therefore concur with the wise position adopted by W.J. Harrington:

*The truth of the matter is that the available evidence is an inadequate basis for any firm conclusion, but by the same token, it is too scanty to convict Luke of historical inaccuracy- a charge that has often been levelled at him.*<sup>264</sup>

Ramsay's argument certainly needs to be rejected on one point. He was uncompromising in his belief that Luke must either be totally right or totally wrong. He seems to have overlooked one possibility, that Luke may have received his information from his sources in good faith and possibly confused either the name of the governor or the nature of the census.

What is certainly inadmissible is to reject the entire Lucan narrative just because one element of it has one aspect which is in doubt. Here, in this passage of all places, the midrashic technique of interpretation must be excluded. Luke is quite evidently attempting to give a chronological link to Christ's birth, as he does in 3:1-2. Yet this has not prevented J. D. M. Derrett from advocating a symbolic or numerological meaning for the name Quirinius (he relates it to the 'horn' of the Messiah) and from finding the motivation for Luke's reference to the Messiah in midrashic beliefs about a census.<sup>265</sup> Such speculations place a further doubt upon the entire procedure of using Jewish midrash as a principle of interpreting the N.T.

As with the former passages in the infancy narrative there are markedly Hebraic characteristics to the narrative as well as a profusion of midrashic interpretations by modern commentators.<sup>266</sup>

## 2. Evidence of a Hebrew Source or Lucan Editorship

The Hebraic characteristics include the terminology, content and structure of the narrative. Evidence of Hebrew influence has been found in Lk. 2:4; 2:8; 2:11; 2:13 and 2:15.<sup>267</sup> The picture of the shepherds keeping watch near Bethlehem in this distinctly Messianic context fits extremely well with contemporary Jewish beliefs about 'the tower of the flock' in Micah 4:9-10. According to the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan on Gen. 35.21 'Jacob proceeded and spread his tent beyond the tower of flocks, the place from whence it is to be that the king Meshiya will be revealed at the end of days.'<sup>268</sup>



The structure of the narrative has certain similarities with the '*prophetic call*' narrative form. Of the six points mentioned by Gerard Meagher, three are repeated here, and a fourth is obliquely referred to. The divine confrontation is found in 2:10-11, and the sign is mentioned in 2:12. They are not verbally commissioned, but their willing response (2:15) becomes an indication of the commission they had clearly perceived in the angels revelation. The objection and the reassurance are missing, but not every narrative fits exactly into the form.<sup>269</sup>

The '*sign*' has structural similarities with the preceding narratives. The sign to Zechariah (1:20) is realised in 1:64. The sign to Mary (1:36) is realised in her meeting with Elizabeth (1:41). The sign to Simeon (2:26) is realised when he sees the child (2:28). The sign to the shepherds (2:12) is realised when they find the child (2:16). This sign-realisation structure repeats itself four times in the two chapters. The attention given to the reactions of the people is characteristic of every case (1:21, 63, 65-66; 1:29; 2:18-19; 2:33; 2:48). These characteristics are typically Hebraic and are a strong reason to regard this pericope as an original part of the infancy tradition. Source theories which separate the second chapter from the first must explain these structural similarities satisfactorily in order to become at all viable. This pericope must be regarded as part of the early Palestinian tradition or source which Luke received as much as any other part of the infancy narrative.

In conjunction with these Hebraic elements are particularly strong elements of Lucan terminology and style. A remarkable feature of Gresham Machen's more restricted linguistic test of Lucan terminology is that Lk. 1:15-20 evidences a pocket of undeniable Lucanisms.<sup>270</sup> Machen does not mention this but it is evident if one notices the occurrences of clear Lucanisms in his research on the first two chapters of Luke. The first few verses of this chapter are also typically Lucan. They can be compared with the similar chronological link given in 3:1-2 and his general historical method displayed in the Acts. These observations may be significant in giving some idea of the way in which Luke edited his material. The central section is markedly Hebraic (vs. 6-14) while the beginning and the end show clear signs of Luke's hand. There are of course some Lucanisms which are evident in the central section as well.

### 3. The use of the O.T. and Luke's Midrashic Method

As regards the midrashic interpretation of this passage it is possible to divide modern commentators into two types. On the one hand there are those (e.g. R. Brown, Laurentin, Harrington) who restrict their midrashic understanding of Luke's method to the Rabbinic belief concerning the '*tower of the flock*' and the reference to Micah 4:8 and 5:2-4.<sup>271</sup> On

the other hand there are a number of scholars who go much further and who believe that Luke saw deep significance in the symbolism of the shepherds, the sign, the swaddling clothes and the manger.<sup>272</sup>

The interpretation of the latter revolves around the meaning of *σημειον*. The usual interpretation of this term is to see the sign as a confirmation to the shepherds of the message which they received from the angels. In this sense no special significance is given to the conditions in which the child was born. Rather, the fact that the shepherds found him as the angels had described him constitutes the confirmation of the sign. It is essential to the midrashic theory that *σημειον* is used in a rather more meaningful sense.<sup>272</sup>

This use of *σημειον* is supported for these interpreters by the use of the word *ρημα* in vs. 15. This reflects the Hebrew dbr. In Semitic thinking the 'thing' and the 'word' could not be distinguished. A word was an event, and events were often understood as words. Thus when the shepherds said 'let us go and see this thing' (*ρημα*), they meant 'let us go and see this event which has meaning'. The condition in which they found the child, the manger and the swaddling clothes, contained a profound meaning. The meaning of *σημειον* is then carried one step further. The sign was given to the shepherds. However in Luke's narrative the role of the shepherds themselves has theological significance (in line with the 'tower of the flock' Messianism). This is clear from Luke's threefold use of *υμω*. The good news is 'to you' the child is born 'to you' and the child in the manger is a sign 'to you'. This means that the recipients of the sign themselves become part of the sign. In addition, these interpreters make much of the word *συμβουλευσα* (vs.19). While they admit that it may simply mean 'to ponder', they add that in Lucan usage (Acts 4:15; 17:18) the word is used in the sense of 'discuss' or 'debate', and that Josephus used it for the act of 'grasping' the meaning of a dream or a mysterious event. This indicates that Mary was caused to ponder the mysterious meaning of these symbolical events. There are three symbols which have significance: the shepherds, the swaddling clothes and the manger.

An essential point of this interpretation is that the shepherds should not be seen as a symbol of the poor and the despised. This they believe is a false idea associated with Christian legendary additions to the 'Christmas story'. Rather they must be seen as representatives of the venerable tradition of shepherds in Israel's history.<sup>273</sup>

A number of typological meanings are given for the manger, some of which are quite remarkable.<sup>274</sup>

The significance of the swaddling clothes is usually found in an allusion to Wisd. Sol. 7:14, which refers to kings being wrapped in swaddling clothes at their birth, or to Ezek. 16:3-6, where Israel was pictured as a child without protection or acceptance.

We must confess to finding great difficulties in this form of midrashic interpretation. The rather morbid and grotesque interpretations of Duncan Derrett are perhaps the most *'advanced'* form of this method, and it seems to be self-evident that they are very far removed from the narrative of Lk. 2:1-20. He notes that few readers would guess that such interpretations were to be found in Luke's theological method. This is very much the case, and perhaps few would believe that Luke intended such meanings even after Derrett's rather involved exposition.<sup>275</sup>

He states that no unprejudiced reader can fail to see that Luke wished the manger to have a prominent place, but this has not been self-evident to a great number of commentators.

The threefold repetition may be taken to imply that Luke regarded this as a central element in his narrative, but it could equally be taken to reflect a characteristic Hebraic repetitiveness, which need not have any special significance. The net result of this method of interpretation is that the real centre of the narrative is hardly mentioned, namely the child himself, who is born as the Messiah of Israel. It needs hardly to be said that the central motif of this pericope is found in 2:11 and 2:13-14. The child to be born is a *σωτηρ* (a favourite Lucan word) who is *χριστος κυριος*, and this fact is declared as the good news, *ευαγγελιδομαι* (vs. 10). Whatever the connotations of vs. 19, clearly the object of Mary's thought is not the conditions in which she finds herself, but the news that was brought from outside, the news of the names which the heavenly angels gave her child. This form of midrashic interpretation removes the central motive of the narrative and replaces it with a mass of involved typology which the advocates of this idea cannot agree upon.

The starting point of the whole enterprise is the meaning of *σημειον*. Here it seems that they have misunderstood both the O.T. and Luke's infancy narrative. When the movement of the sun on Hezekiah's sundial is taken to signify the *'redressing (of) his father's cultic misdeeds'* one wonders whether a certain understanding of *σημειον* is not being read into the O.T. rather than deduced from the O.T. There is of course a prophetic and dynamic use of *'signs'* in the O.T., but the use of the concept is not as clearly defined as these scholars would suggest. That Luke understood *σημειον* in this sense is most improbable. This is because the Lucan usage is defined by the occurrences of this word in the narrative of the infancy in general. It is not possible to see Elizabeth's pregnancy as somehow an explanation of the meaning of the angel's message to Mary, or an event which caused Mary's sign to

find its fulfilment. Rather *σημειων* simply signifies the fact that Mary receives a confirmation as to the validity of the angelic revelation. Neither is it possible to see Zechariah's dumbness as an explanation of the meaning of the angelic revelation which he received. These cases define the meaning of *σημειων* in Lk. 2:12, which is not the meaning postulated by these scholars.

The word *ρημα* certainly does reflect the Hebrew *dbr.* The 'thing' which the shepherds saw can indeed not be separated from the 'word' they received. But the 'thing' was a child, who was the object of the angelic 'word'. There is no need to include the typological meaning of the swaddling clothes and the manger.

The centrality of the shepherds is supposed to be stressed by the threefold *υμω*. But this is not so. In vs. 10 *παντι τω λαω* places the emphasis upon *ητις εσται* 'which shall have the special character of being for all people - The *ητις* has manifest point here'.<sup>276</sup> The emphasis is not on the shepherds themselves, as much as the shepherds as representatives of the people.<sup>277</sup> Against the background of Luke's theology of the 'poor' it is difficult not to see the shepherds as a symbol of all those 'not many wise, not many powerful, not many of noble birth' (1 Cor. 1:26-27) who in the majority populated the first Christian congregations.<sup>278</sup> The supposed allusion to Isa. 1:3-4 presents a typical case where two scholars using this method come to opposite conclusions. The idea of divine rejection is exactly the opposite of divine sustenance.<sup>279</sup>

Do these criticisms mean that no element of midrash can be found in Lk. 2:1-20? We referred in the beginning of this discussion to the more restricted form of midrashic interpretation, especially due to the attested first century ideas about the 'tower of the flock'. The correspondences between Micah and Luke, as shown by Rene Laurentin are striking.<sup>280</sup> These correspondences would be almost persuasive, were it not for the fact that Luke does not specifically refer to Micah, as for instance Matthew does. There is always the possibility of reading a meaning into the text. This midrashic allusion, if taken in the sense of 'Christian midrash' is probably correct. We are now in a position to discuss the historical probability of this narrative.

Those who doubt the historicity of this pericope usually do so on the grounds of the artificiality of Luke's theological-midrashic method.<sup>281</sup> The past discussion has shown that the so-called midrashic theory in its extreme cannot be substantiated, and that the exegesis of the text through such methods is beset with grave difficulties. On the other hand the more restrained and limited use of this method as proposed for Luke does not lead to a diminishing of the historicity of the narrative. Such research leaves the starting point of

the narrative very much on the side of the historical tradition rather than O.T. typology.

A further point is that the narrative shows clear signs of Lucan editorship at the beginning and the end. This means that the narrative has been carefully reconstructed by Luke and the general status of Luke's historiography must determine, to some extent, the value of this narrative. Luke's historiography will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

#### 4. Was Mary Luke's Witness?

Commentators have traditionally taken Lk. 2:19 as a sign that Mary was the witness whom Luke (or the tradition) was depending upon for this account. This question can only be fully discussed in relation to the authorship and date of Luke-Acts and the general result concerning the origin of the infancy tradition which Luke received. At this point an exegetical question arises. Can Lk. 2:19 and 2:51 be taken as a claim of eye-witness evidence? E. Burrows argued in favour of such a claim on the basis of similar allusions in the gospel of John (Jn. 13:24; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 18:5f; 21:23; 1:14) and the Johannine epistle (1 Jn. 1:1-4).<sup>282</sup> More recently F. Neirynck has advocated the theory that Mary is described by an apocalyptic formula which portrays her as a *'keeper of the vision'*. He bases his contention upon what he regards as a cluster of terms used in apocalyptic visions, *αγγελος*, *δοξα*, *ευδοκίας*, and *συνετηρει τα ρήματα* - vs. 10, 14, 19).<sup>283</sup>

Ben F. Meyer has carefully examined this theory and found it wanting. These terms were used in apocalyptic literature but they were also used in a wide variety of contexts.<sup>284</sup> The significant contribution which Meyer then makes is to show how Mary's reaction cannot be totally isolated from the other *'reaction'* terminology which is a distinctive feature of Luke's narrative. For instance Lk. 1:66 uses similar terminology to describe the reaction of the Judean people at the birth of John, and Mary's reaction is linked with that of others (2:33; 2:50).

Further, a recurring theme of the infancy narrative is the reaction of those who receive a Messianic disclosure (1:18-23; 1:29; 1:63,66; 2:15,20 2:28-35). Mary's reaction is a part of this overall structure. Meyer's contribution therefore displaces Neirynck's theory. However it does not support the older view of E. Burrows. Meyer rejects the traditional view on the grounds that Mary's reaction is part of a general *'reaction'* terminology of Luke and because he believes Lk. 2:19 and 2:51 are derived from the Palestinian source which Luke received.<sup>285</sup> His work has certainly shown that one cannot make a direct comparison

between the Johannine references and Mary's reaction recorded here. However, the conclusion needs to be slightly altered on two points. Firstly, in 2:19 Mary's reaction is clearly distinguished from that of the people (*η δε Μαρια παντα συνετηρει* etc.)<sup>286</sup> Luke does seem to place more emphasis on Mary's reaction than on any other. The general character of the infancy narrative shows evidence of a feminine view of things, and the story is clearly told from Mary's point of view. Joseph's role is hardly described, and his reactions, though mentioned briefly, do not really figure in this narrative. Secondly, it is doubtful whether Lk. 2:19 and 2:51 are derived from Palestinian tradition. As has been noted, Lk. 2:15-20 is particularly well endowed with distinctive Lucanisms. The word *συμβαλλειν* (2:19) occurs six times in the Lucan writings, not at all in the remainder of the N.T., and is rare in the Septuagint.<sup>287</sup> The argument of E. Burrows has been somewhat weakened, but it is still not easy to avoid the conclusion that Luke meant us to understand that he was relying on Mary's personal testimony.<sup>288</sup> Whether that claim can be at all justified will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

## THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE LK. 2:21-40

### 1. Evidence of a Hebrew Source

This pericope continues to present evidence of a Hebraic source or tradition. Scholars have found traces in 2:29; 2:32,34; 3:7.<sup>289</sup> The circumcision of Jesus is not emphasised. There is no theological significance placed on this event. The name receives prominence (vs 21).<sup>290</sup> The naming of the child in conjunction with circumcision has been discussed in relation to John's birth.

### 2. Critical Problems in the Narrative

Lk. 2:22-24 presents various difficulties. Firstly, two ceremonies are combined in the narrative which were quite distinct in the law (Lev. 12:1-8; Ex. 13:1-2; Num. 18:16). The purification of the mother required a sacrifice but the consecration of the first-born required no visit to the temple. However, that the two ceremonies were distinct in Jewish law need not mean that they could not be accomplished at the same time. The redemption of the first-born could take place only thirty-one days after birth according to Rabbinical law, while the purification of the mother took place forty-one days after birth. This gap of up to only ten days could easily cause mothers to combine the two ceremonies. Working from Jewish tradition, Edersheim states that,

*mothers who were within convenient distance  
of the temple, and especially the more earnest*

*among them, would then naturally attend personally in the temple and in such cases, when practicable, the redemption of the first born and the purification of the mother would be combined.*<sup>291</sup>

There are no good grounds for regarding Luke's account as incompatible with Jewish practice, although it must be admitted that the various Jewish ceremonies have been *'assimilated to one another so closely that it is difficult to disentangle them'*.<sup>292</sup>

Secondly, *καθαρισμὸν αὐτῶν* presents a difficulty. According to the law only the mother was ceremonially unclean. Some have taken *αὐτῶν* to refer to the Jews (Ederheim), others to refer to Mary and Jesus, and others to Mary and Joseph. The *ἀνῆγαγον* of the second part of the verse makes the last interpretation the easiest.<sup>293</sup> It cannot be finally concluded though that any of these three suggestions is impossible. If the last case is to be accepted, it means that Luke understood Joseph to have derived his impurity from Mary during the period of forty days. This may reflect a Lucan redaction. The fact that Jesus or Mary is portrayed as in need of ritual purification can also be taken as a mark of the historicity of the narrative. The apocryphal gospels regarded the birth as painless and spotless. Such a detail as is introduced here would be unlikely if the narrative was spontaneously or imaginatively developed.<sup>294</sup>

The *ἐπλησθησαν* of vs. 22 may indicate that Luke saw this event as theologically significant. The Lord, whom Simeon had been seeking (Mal. 3:1), and whom John was to precede in the spirit and power of Elijah (Mal. 4:5), had now come to his temple. The days of Mary's *'fulfilment'* pointed to a far more profound fulfilment.<sup>295</sup> It must be said though that if this was in Luke's mind, he has only insinuated it with restraint. It is not obvious from the narrative. The popular tendency amongst commentators to see this as the *'climax'* of Luke's infancy narrative takes the evidence too far.<sup>296</sup>

Some scholars (e.g. Creed, Bultmann) regard the response of Mary and Joseph, and the name *'father'* given to the latter (vs. 33) as an indication of an original tradition that was unaware of the virginal conception. Such a view is not supported by a number of commentators and introduces an artificial criterion into the narrative. If Simeon did make such statements the lack of such a reaction would be totally inexplicable in terms of Mary's humanity.<sup>297</sup>

The return to Nazareth, mentioned in 2:39, conflicts with Matthew's infancy narrative. The best solution is to follow this order: the birth, the presentation in the temple, the

return to Bethlehem (not Nazareth), the visit of the Magi, the flight to Egypt and the return to Nazareth.<sup>298</sup> Luke was clearly ignorant of Matthew's account and, as was his habit, rounded off the narrative with what he presumed to have been the obvious course of events (2:40 and 1:80). This does not constitute an irreconcilable contradiction between the substance of the two infancy narratives. Given the qualification of time introduced into Lk. 2:40 from Matthew's tradition, the two accounts can be harmonised quite satisfactorily. Strauss' attempt to make this single problematical verse into a huge problem is totally unnecessary.<sup>299</sup>

### 3. The Identity of Simeon

The identification of Simeon with the son of Hillel is usually rejected out of hand by commentators.<sup>300</sup> However, a recent article by Allan Culter should cause us to pause before merely accepting this scholarly consensus.<sup>301</sup> He seems to have specialised in the subject of the Hillel family.<sup>302</sup>

The evidence which he brings can certainly never give us anything more than a possibility, but at the same time should prevent us from regarding the theory as an impossibility.<sup>303</sup> Such a possibility would argue strongly for a primitive tradition. A later Christian writer would never have willingly associated a later member of the Sanhedrin with this welcoming of the Christ-child.

### 4. Simeon's Prophetic Utterance

The *nunc dimitis* once again evidences characteristics which place it in the context of early Palestinian Christianity. There are correspondences with the Septuagint, with later Jewish psalmography, and elements which indicate that the age of fulfilment has come.<sup>304</sup> This need not be a prophecy after the event. The terminology is very much that of Isaiah (Isa. 52:9-10; 49:8; 46:13; 42:6; 40:5). The predictions are too general to be clearly linked with the subsequent life of Christ.

Of course those who cannot believe in such predictions and in the work of the Holy Spirit will have to regard it as a prophecy after the event. Such a belief is not demanded by the historical method and the current experience of the church in numerous cases gives enough evidence of the reality of such phenomena.<sup>305</sup>

### 5. The Use of the O.T. and Luke's Midrashic Method

This pericope is accounted for by Goulder and Sanderson as follows: Zechariah, the



old Levite, prophesied over John's circumcision. Levi's brother was Simeon, and 'Simeon was kept for a slave till the coming of Israel's son Benjamin, in Genesis'. Jesus' circumcision is greeted by another Simeon who is thereby released (2:29). Luke uses the words of Abraham to express this release (Gen. 15:2). Simeon's utterance is an amalgamation of Isaianic texts. *The Nunc Dimitis is a meditation on Isaiah, set once more on the basis of Genesis between the two pillars of Abraham and Israel.* 'Anna' is founded on the O.T. 'Hannah', and as she comes from the last of Israel's tribes (Asher) she is the last to greet the New Israel;

*eleven of her twelve weeks of years have been spent in virginity in widowhood, one week of years in marriage, presumably symbolic of the first kingdom, is behind her. With the twelve weeks, as with the twelve judges, and the twelve tribes, and the twelve prophets, Israel is complete, and the Messiah is at hand.*<sup>306</sup>

The ingenuity of these typologies is remarkable: too remarkable for Luke's simple narrative. The artificiality of this view is apparent.<sup>307</sup> Despite a few problems, the historicity of this pericope cannot be rejected on any objective grounds.<sup>308a</sup> Even Strauss was prepared to admit that Jesus must have been circumcised. The scene in the temple is within expectations. The only real 'difficulty' is again the element of the miraculous which can only be defined as a difficulty with a certain set of presuppositions which are not necessary to historical criticism. While Luke cannot be said to have created the narrative from O.T. texts, Laurentin's examination of Luke's use of Malachi does indicate that his language is meant to identify Jesus as the Lord who has come to his temple.<sup>308b</sup>

## THE BOY JESUS IN THE TEMPLE LK. 2:41-52

### 1. Evidence of a Hebrew Source and a Palestinian Background

It must be admitted that Hebraisms are not as frequent in this narrative as in the other sections of the infancy narrative. Paul Winter mentions one verse (Lk. 2:52); *προεκοπεν εν τη σοφια* reflects the Hebrew text of 1 Sam. 2:25 better than the Septuagint text, and *προεκοπεν εν ηλικια και χαριτι* he terms 'an inept translation of the Hebraic expression'.<sup>309</sup>

The structure of the language does show a certain tendency to Hebraic forms. 'Nearly all the sentences start with *kai* followed immediately, or almost immediately by the verb.'<sup>310</sup>

The subject matter does show an acquaintance with Palestinian customs. The way in which Jesus was lost on the way is in keeping with the manner of travel to and from the temple

feasts. The wives and children would travel separately from the men and then all would meet together in the evening. Jesus was of such an age that Mary could have easily thought him to be with Joseph and Joseph could have thought he was with Mary.<sup>311</sup> The way in which Jesus was found in the temple '*sitting amongst the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions*' (vs. 46) is also true to custom. '*The asking of questions by the pupil formed an essential element in the ancient Jewish method of instruction.*'<sup>312</sup>

The preparation of young boys prior to their induction at the age of thirteen has been held to be attested.<sup>313</sup> However, Henk J. de Jonge has made a good case for the view that the age of twelve reflects the age of youth as distinct from the age of manhood. Luke uses this figure therefore to bring out the extraordinary intelligence of the child.<sup>314</sup> Further the evidence for the bar mitzvah practice at the age of twelve or thirteen comes from much later than the N.T. Consequently not too much weight can be placed upon this point as an indication of a Palestinian background. By the same token it does not deny such a background either. The belief that Jesus' acknowledgement of God as his father reflects the later Christological development of church doctrine has been called in question by Paul Winter's exhaustive study on Targum Yerushalmi.<sup>315</sup> His work has been criticised by Rene Laurentin.<sup>316</sup> However, while the possibility remains that he is correct in his thesis we cannot automatically take Lk. 2:49 as a reflection of later tradition. The fact that Jesus is found submitting to the Rabbis (unlike the apocryphal gospels), and the fact that the suggestion of his disobedience is allowed at all, makes it difficult to accept the pericope as a creation of the evangelist or of the primitive community.<sup>317</sup>

## 2. The Ignorance of Christ's Parents

A difficulty felt by some scholars is the ignorance attributed to Jesus' parents. This they feel conflicts with the knowledge which Mary is said to have received at the annunciation. The conclusion is then made that this pericope must have circulated in an independent tradition.<sup>318</sup> But such logic must first presume the non-historicity of the narrative. As soon as Mary and Joseph are accepted as real human beings who actually experienced the events which are recorded, the artificiality of these objections becomes plain. If the disciples were first attracted to Jesus because of his Messianic image, but only really understood the full implications of his identity after the resurrection, one can scarcely expect a young Jewish mother of Galilee to understand more, despite the revelations she received. Of course one cannot simply presume the historicity of the account either. This does not detract from the fact that it is an unwarranted assumption to presume its non-historicity.

### 3. Form-critical and Redaction-critical Analyses.

This pericope has often been analysed by form-critics, and here a variety of interpretations are to be found. According to Martin Dibelius the pericope was a typical case of *Personallegende*. This is a story told about a person of special virtue or holiness who is regarded as especially favoured by God. The pericope is said to be devoid of catechetical interest. Neither is it a part of the kerygmatic tradition. It belongs rather to the genre of story-telling where the personal reactions of the individuals are paramount.<sup>319</sup> B. van Iersel takes the opposite view. He finds it to be a typical case of a *Paradigma* or 'prouncement story.' The text is concise and sober. The beginning and the end of the story is rounded off by a literary device (2:41-42 and 51-52). At the end of the dialogue comes the logion (vs. 49) which is the main point of the story. He concludes the *'The paradigmatic form of the original narrative is not without importance. It shows that the primitive story is neither legendary nor novelistic', it 'belongs to a primitive stage of the tradition', and therefore 'provides us with the most reliable information about Jesus that can be derived from the synoptic gospels.'*<sup>320</sup>

Henk J. de Jonge argues for two traditions in this pericope, one earlier, where the accent is on Christ's unique consciousness of Sonship, and the later, which emphasises the common motif of a famous child with an unusual intelligence. He believes the present narrative shows signs of tension between the two traditions and holds that the latter is due to the literary traditions of Luke while the former is due to pre-Lucan tradition.<sup>321</sup>

These widely differing estimations of the pericope illustrate the difficulty of the form-critical method itself. It is well known that while European scholars tend to go beyond the actual 'form' of the narrative, and use their conclusions to make judgments upon the historicity of the narrative, the English form-critics tend to restrict the method to the question of form. They do this because they believe it is illegitimate to apply the form-critical method to another area of enquiry.<sup>322</sup> Their approach to the method tends to be substantiated by the very diversity of opinion that exists on the 'primitiveness' or 'lateness' which different scholars often attribute to the same pericope. In the case of this particular pericope it does not seem that one can give much weight to the form-critical approach simply because the pericope is not quite like any particular narrative type. It stands midway between the infancy narrative and the ordinary gospel narrative and so there are no criteria with which it can be judged. The same problem applies to the redaction-critical method in this case. Simply because Jesus is portrayed as an unusually intelligent child certainly gives us no warrant to conclude that the account is fictitious. The idea of a *Personallegende* does not really apply.<sup>323</sup>

The redactional nature of verse 47 (Van Iersel, de Jonge) is not clear to all commentators (Marshall).<sup>324</sup> The tensions between the two traditions (de Jonge) are quite possibly only in the mind of the modern scholar.<sup>325a</sup>

#### 4. Lucan Theological Motifs

The pericope draws attention to two prominent Lucan theological themes. Firstly, apart from the origins of Jesus' statement about his father, the text as it stands in the Lucan redaction emphasises the Sonship of Jesus as the central point. Jesus is set in contrast to his parents. His understanding (*συνεσει* vs 47) is contrasted with their lack of understanding (vs. 50 *ου συνηκαν*), and 'your father' (*πατηρ σου* vs 48) is contrasted with 'my father' (*του πατρος μου* vs. 49). This growing appreciation of his unique Sonship is found side by side with the combination of terms which Luke uses for Jesus. Firstly he mentions the babe (*το βρεφος*), then the child (*παιδιον* vs 40) and now the boy (*ο παις* vs. 43). This prepares us for the plain mention of 'Jesus' in vs 52. The same idea of development is found in 2:40 and 2:52. The growth in physical and spiritual stature is matched by a growing awareness of his unique Sonship which will bring to an end his submission to his parents (vs 51). The theology of Christ's Sonship is set in the context of the transition from childhood to adulthood and so the infancy narrative is brought to an end and the way is prepared for the 'way preparer' himself, John the Baptist. The pattern of the children is now ready to be repeated in the two public ministries of John and Jesus.

Secondly, Luke was particularly interested in Jerusalem and the temple. The infancy narrative opens with the temple ritual, and it ends with two scenes back in the temple. The life of Christ ends with the scenes in the temple and the history of the church begins again in the temple. This theme becomes evident in this final pericope.<sup>325b</sup>

Thirdly, the *δει* ('I must') can be linked with the sense of urgent mission in the remainder of Jesus' ministry (Lk. 4:43; 9:22; 17:25; 22:37; 24:7,26; 13:32-33).<sup>326</sup>

#### THE GENERAL STATUS OF LUCAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THEOLOGY

In the final analysis the historical value of the infancy narrative must be related to the general nature of the Lucan writings. This introduces us to a subject which is much under discussion at the moment and about which a great deal is being written. Here only a basic position can be adopted and certain arguments can be stated.

## 1. The dating of Luke-Acts

The first issue that needs to be dealt with is that of dating, since a great deal follows from the particular date which is adopted. The actual identity of 'Luke' will not be discussed at this point.

Three possible dates have been advocated. Firstly a date soon after the imprisonment of Paul and prior to the fall of Jerusalem has been suggested. Secondly, a date after the fall of Jerusalem but prior to A.D. 90 has been suggested. Thirdly, some have suggested that Luke was written between A.D. 115-135.

The last dating mentioned has not met with much success.<sup>327</sup> Thus for instance Howard Marshall mentions that there are only two 'serious possibilities' in the dating of Luke, namely the first and second dating mentioned above.<sup>328</sup> We shall not discuss the third suggestion here. The two remaining possibilities are intimately connected with the dating of Acts. Those who adopt the earlier dating of Luke place Acts at about A.D. 64, while those who adopt the later dating date Acts between A.D. 70 and A.D. 85. The synoptic relationship between Mark and Luke means that the earlier dating of Luke must go hand in hand with the earlier dating of Mark. (It is of course possible that the standard synoptic source theory is incorrect.) The issue is therefore rather complex.

We shall begin with a discussion of the latest book first, namely the Acts. Kümmel began his argument in favour of a later dating of Acts as follows;

*Since Acts, as the second part of the Lucan double work, must have been written later than Luke, which was written after 70, a date before 80 is out of the question.*<sup>329</sup>

To this he added no arguments, except that he rejected the attempt by O'Neill to make a comparison between the writings of Justin and Acts.

This reveals a fundamental weakness in the later dating of Acts. The whole position is based upon the dating of Luke, and in fact a particular point in the dating of Luke, namely the supposed reference to the fall of Jerusalem. Donald Guthrie cogently argued that;

*it is a doubtful method of dating early books*

*to use a particular interpretation of the one available datum and then to build a super-structure of the other books upon it. It will be clear that if a predictive element in the ministry of Jesus is allowed the whole basis of this generally held dating collapses!* <sup>330</sup>

Against this rather weak argument for the later dating of Acts are a number of persuasive arguments in favour of an earlier date. They were clearly stated by Bruce in his commentary on Acts.

1. Luke betrays little acquaintance with the Pauline epistles. Kümmel agrees that this is an almost '*universal opinion*'.<sup>331</sup>
2. Acts ends abruptly with Paul's Roman imprisonment.<sup>332</sup>

In the light of the fact that Luke has followed Paul's career so closely up to this point, it becomes almost impossible to believe that he would have failed to mention Paul's death had he known about it, and even more difficult to believe that he would not have mentioned Paul's trial.<sup>333</sup> Attempts to evade this by postulating an imaginary '*third volume*' to Luke's work, or referring to a supposed reference to Paul's death in Acts. 20:25, or suggesting that Luke did not want to include Paul's death because he did not want to compare it with Christ's death are not satisfactory.<sup>334</sup> J.A.T. Robinson terms these arguments the '*recourses of desperation*'.<sup>335</sup>

As regards Acts 20:25 there is enough evidence in Acts and the Pauline epistles to show that Paul did have a premonition of his death. In fact this argument can be reversed. The Pastoral Epistles seem to show that Paul revisited Ephesus.<sup>336</sup> Would Luke have left his statements in Acts 20:25,38 to stand if he had known this?<sup>337</sup> Further Paul's statement in Acts 20 is quite understandable in view of his intention to go on to Spain (Rom. 15:23f).

3. The attitude of the Roman authorities in Acts makes it exceedingly difficult to believe that the Neronian persecution had already taken place.
4. No mention is made of the fall of Jerusalem. Luke notes the fulfilment of the prophecy of Agabus (Acts 11:28). In addition Jerusalem had a significant place in both his theology and his history. It becomes very difficult to see why he did not mention or even allude to this momentous event, especially since he gives Christ's prediction of it in Lk. 21:20-28.<sup>338</sup>

5. Issues which were important for the church prior to the fall of Jerusalem receive considerable attention, for instance the position of the gentiles in the church, the food requirements of the law, and the apostolic decree from the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15).
  
6. The primitive nature of the Christology in Acts adds to the earlier date. Jesus is given such names as *παις Θεου, υιου του ανθρωπου* and *ο ιδιος* (4:27, 7:56; 20:28).<sup>339</sup> Further, the disciples are called *μαθητι* (An early term). The Jewish Nation is called the *λαος*. Sunday is termed, '*the first day of the week*'. The theology of the resurrection given by Luke also seems to be consistent with an earlier rather than a later date.<sup>340</sup> C.K. Barrett's belief that Acts is rather '*remote and vague*' about the early history of the church, and that Luke was: '*describing one age of the Church, and that a unique one, with the pre-supposition of another*' is not based upon objective criteria.<sup>341</sup> He refers to a number of '*anomalies*' in Acts as a basis for this opinion. For instance, did the gift of the Spirit precede, accompany, or follow baptism? The question is, are the anomalies which Barrett sees really historical anomalies or are these a true reflection of certain experiences within the early church and perhaps the church of all ages? This question need not be viewed as Barrett viewed it, consequently the basis of his position is precarious. Further, the lack of a *theologia crucis*<sup>342</sup> has been taken by Barrett to show that Luke's theology is much later than Mark's.<sup>343</sup> But this so-called lack is questionable. Leon Morris points out that at an earlier stage Plummer could see Luke's gospel as especially one of '*Atonement and Propitiation*'. 'In fact', Morris says, '*the cross dominates the whole*'. For instance the journey to Jerusalem receives special emphasis (with Jesus '*setting his face to go up to Jerusalem*' Lk. 9:51) in Luke, which builds up to the climax of the cross. It is true that Luke does not state the meaning of the cross in the same manner as Paul or John, but that does not mean that it is not central to his theology.<sup>344</sup> In similar vein Howard Marshall points out that: '*As compared with Mark and Matthew...Luke's silence about the death of Jesus in the Gospel is not especially remarkable*'.<sup>344b</sup>

It is true that there is no emphasis on the cross in Acts. But this is due to the fact that Luke has '*preserved one form of the early preaching in which particular stress was laid on the resurrection*', and in fact the atoning significance of the cross is not altogether absent from

Acts. <sup>345</sup> Marshall concludes, *'it is going too far to say that he has no rationale of salvation.'* <sup>346</sup> We may add that if Luke has preserved the emphasis of the resurrection rather than the cross, this can be used to argue for the primitiveness of his view of the cross as much as the lateness of his theology. <sup>347</sup>

The so-called *'early catholicism'* of Luke's theology is taken as an indication of its lateness. This will be dealt with below. At this stage we may point out that the whole question of Luke's *'early catholicism'* is still much under discussion, as is the supposed *'historicising'* of the primitive kerygma. <sup>348</sup> It is often assumed that Luke's portrayal of Paul is irreconcilable with the Paul of the Pauline epistles. This will also be discussed below. At this point we may simply note that while there are real difficulties we see no reason why these need be forced into an irreconcilable contradiction, and we question whether a balanced view of this problem need demand a later dating of Acts. <sup>349</sup>

These arguments do not therefore weaken the force of the other considerations which we have mentioned. The arguments in favour of an early dating for Acts are so persuasive that any arguments for the later dating of Luke must be especially strong if they are to displace the earlier dating of Acts. It is interesting to note that in his recent rather revolutionary book, J.A.T. Robinson begins his argument for the early dating of the Synoptics with a consideration of the dating of Acts. We must agree with him that this is the place to start, because the fall of Jerusalem and the trial of Paul are two of the very few anchors which we have for the entire dating of the N.T. books. It is also interesting to notice how in Robinson's work Harnack is shown to have moved to an early dating of Luke and Acts against his own thinking. His work in this field is one of the most exhaustive studies that has ever been undertaken. <sup>350</sup>

The basis of the later dating of Luke revolves around the so-called prediction *ex eventu* in Lk. 21. Kümmel gave four arguments. Firstly, according to Lk. 1:1 *'many'* had already written before him. According to Kümmel this could not have been the case in A.D. 60. No reasons for this assumption were given however. Secondly, Luke *'looks back upon the fall of Jerusalem'*. <sup>351</sup> The basis of this assumption was that when one compares Mk. 13:14 with Lk. 21:20 it is evident that Luke has replaced the apocalyptic imagery of Mark with a clear picture of the actual circumstances that took place during the siege of Jerusalem. <sup>352</sup> In addition to these two arguments was firstly the fact that Luke used Mark, and Mark is usually dated not earlier than A.D. 68, and secondly that Matthew is later, and it is held that Luke and Matthew could not have separated each other much in time. Of these four arguments the prediction of the fall of Jerusalem is the one which carries most weight for the advocates of the later date. <sup>353</sup> However, this argument is dubious, to say the least. B.



Reicke has gone so far as to speak of it as '*an amazing example of uncritical dogmatism in N.T. Studies*'.<sup>354</sup> Firstly, a number of scholars believe that when Luke does not follow Mark exactly it may be that he has the benefit of an independent tradition.<sup>355</sup>

Secondly, other reasons may be given for Luke's different statement of this prediction. The Markan language would be understandable to Jews, but Luke would be more understandable to Romans. There is a consensus of opinion that Luke usually Hellenises Mark.<sup>356</sup> Then there is the difficulty of why Matthew, if he had also written after the event, did not re-shape the narrative in the same way. Further, Luke's description (in the mouth of Jesus) of the siege of the city uses language that was common to ancient military campaigns. It is general and not specific, and so cannot be regarded as an '*exact description*' of the events that took place. There is the further problem that some of the events ran counter to the details of the prediction which is recorded in the synoptic gospels.<sup>357</sup> A much better explanation is that Jesus spoke both of the '*desolating sacrilege*' and the siege works around the city.<sup>358</sup> It may be held that there is a presumption against the possibility of such a good prediction. To this it may be answered firstly that this kind of argument is usually the product of an erroneous understanding of historical probability (see chapter 3 above). Secondly the flight of the Christians to Pella tends to indicate that they were aware of it (and note, the advice to those in the city to flee out of it comes from Lk. 21:21 and not Mk. 13). Thirdly, given the kind of Person Jesus was, the likelihood of such a prediction becomes very good. Donald Guthrie mentions the accurate predictions of Savonarola concerning the capture of Rome.<sup>359</sup> Concerning the prediction it is interesting to note that Kümmel, who bases his argument upon the fact that Luke '*looked back*' on the event, states that '*Jesus prophecy of judgement upon Jerusalem must be regarded as historical*'.<sup>360</sup> This admission tends to undermine his whole position. The use of the *ex eventu* argument is therefore very weak. In fact J.A.T. Robinson following B. Reicke, is of the opinion that, if anything, the apocalyptic discourses in the synoptic gospels argue for a date before A.D. 70, for all the synoptic gospels.<sup>361</sup>

The other three reasons are without much weight. The later dating of Mark is not universally accepted by N.T. scholars.<sup>362</sup> In any event Luke, if he was a colleague of Mark in Paul's missionary team, may have had recourse to Mark soon after it was written. There seems to be no good reason for maintaining that Luke must have been written during the same period as Matthew, and there is no good reason for holding that '*many writings*' could not have been in circulation by A.D. 60.<sup>363</sup> All this leads to the conclusion that the reasons for the later dating of Luke are not strong. They cannot therefore displace the persuasive arguments in favour of an early dating for Acts. Consequently the earlier dating

for both Luke and Acts is preferable.

This conclusion can then be taken further. It then becomes clear that the most likely interpretation of the 'we' sections in Acts is that the author was a companion of Paul, and the traditional authorship of Luke-Acts by Luke, the physician, becomes the most probable hypothesis. C.K. Barrett comments that; '*it is wildly improbable that this (i.e. the 'we' section) is merely a device of fiction which the author used when he remembered to do so, but more often forgot.*'<sup>364</sup>

This means that he had first-hand testimony of Paul's career, and that he must have met men such as Barnabas and Paul's missionary workers. He probably met Peter (Gal. 2:11 f). During Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea he must have met Philip's household (Acts 21:8-9). In Jerusalem he stayed with Mnason, one of the early disciples (Acts 21.16). He met James, the Lord's brother, '*and this contact with the holy family may suggest a possible source for the nativity narrative of Lk. 1 and 2.*'<sup>365</sup>

The previously cautious conclusion which has been given as to the claim of Mary's authority behind the infancy narrative can now be taken further. It now becomes distinctly possible that Luke received the tradition from the holy family, who in turn were dependent upon the mother of Jesus.

Such reasoning can never be proved, but while even a good possibility exists that such were the circumstances of Luke's authorship, it becomes precarious to make sweeping statements about Luke's '*inaccuracy*' or '*misunderstanding*' of the history of the early Christian community. The burden of proof is upon those who wish to impugn his accuracy in these matters.

## 2. Luke the Historian

There are two basic areas of enquiry when it comes to the historical worth of Luke's writing. Firstly, there is the question of '*Luke among the historians*', that is, his relationship to ancient Hellenistic and Jewish historians. Secondly, there is the question of the various tests of his accuracy in terms of redaction-criticism, his references to geographical and political details, his use of the speeches in Acts, and his theological emphases.

C.K. Barrett has suggested that Luke's literary method may be compared to the Hellenistic romance. He mentions specifically Philostatus' *Life of Appolonious of Tyana*, where according to the author, Appolonious '*healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out demons, and preached the good news*'. He also compares Luke's historiography to the Jewish histo-

rians (particularly 1 Maccabees) who saw history from a religious point of view. They wrote history as a confession of faith. He notes that these writers wrote without scruples about supernatural events and that Luke shared with them, *'the naivete'* of a pre-scientific outlook on nature. Howard Marshall similarly compares Luke with ancient historians. He says, *'it is legitimate to ask to which historian Luke stands nearer: Josephus or Polybius?'* Does Luke stand amongst those Greek historians who wished to please with their rhetoric rather than demonstrate the truth, or does he stand nearer to Jewish historians like Josephus who could easily distort the events in favour of his own people, or neither? In answer to this Marshall points out that in many of the speeches of Acts Luke has chosen crudity of style rather than rhetorical effect. This seems to indicate that he was not simply out to please. Further, the speeches in Acts are so unlike anything else in either Greek or Jewish history that it is best not to make too many hasty comparisons. Marshall comments; *'Our conclusion is that the attempt to set Luke in the context of ancient historians does not lead to any firm result'*.<sup>366</sup>

The value of his history must be tested on other grounds.<sup>367</sup> The historical work of Luke-Acts has undergone a great deal of discussion since the monumental study of Sir William Ramsay. On the one hand Martin Dibelius, on the basis of a form-critical approach to Acts, tended to reject the conclusion which Ramsay had advocated. He proposed that Luke used the speeches in Acts according to the typical Hellenistic habit of placing words in the mouth of certain individuals in order to enhance the literary effect of the narrative.<sup>368</sup> Both Bertil Gästner and Arnold Ehrhardt tended to reverse this conclusion. They emphasised the Semitic nature of Luke's writings and concluded that he was sincere in his attempt to relate what really happened.<sup>369</sup> From a rather different approach Robert Morganthaler supported the fact that Luke did not simply write as a creative author. His artistry, if it could be so termed, was to structure his history into couplets, which he intended to operate as the *'two or three witnesses'* required for legal justification.<sup>370</sup> The most negative estimation of Luke's history has come in recent years from Hans Conzelmann and Ernst Haenchen.<sup>371</sup> Conzelmann's basic stricture of Luke's writing is in terms of his so-called *'historicising of the early kerygma'*. The early church believed in the imminent arrival of the parousia. They were disappointed in this expectation. Luke therefore developed a view of historical process which could give an answer to this problem.<sup>372</sup> He reconstructed the history of redemption into three epochs:

*The period of Israel...*

*The period of Jesus...and*

*The period between the coming of Jesus and His parousia.*<sup>373</sup>

While this reconstruction was a *'fruitful perception'* according to C.K. Barrett, in Conzelmann's view it nevertheless caused him to falsify the historical origins of the early church, and in particular the essence of the apostolic kerygma.<sup>374</sup> Ernst Haenchen follows Conzelmann in his view that the delay of the parousia played such a vital role in the shaping of Lucan theology. He advocates that Luke sought to bridge the gap between the time of Jesus and time of the church by the history of the process of the word of God from the one period to the other. For this reason Luke has submerged the real nature of the explosive issues, such as the relationship between Jews and Gentiles and the origin of the Gentile mission. His picture of Paul is therefore demonstrably false.<sup>375</sup> Following this line of argument these scholars believe that a real contradiction exists between Luke's portrayal of Paul and the Paul known to us from his epistles.<sup>376</sup> They also believe that Luke has placed an emphasis on the church as the vehicle of salvation in the place of the lost awareness of the eschaton. The term for this emphasis on the church is *'early Catholicism'*, though the content of this term can vary considerably.<sup>377</sup>

Before discussing these two scholars it will be helpful to mention the areas where objective criteria can be used in the testing of Luke's historiography. Firstly in terms of chronology, geography and contemporary politics Luke's accuracy remains a firm conclusion which is demanded by the evidence.<sup>378</sup> Hans Conzelmann has attempted to show that Luke's geographical references are confused and symbolic rather than historical, but his arguments have not carried weight.<sup>379</sup> Against this A.N. Sherwinwhite has concluded that;

*on matters of Hellenistic geography and politics, Roman Law and provincial administration, Luke can be demonstrated to be for the most part a reliable guide.*<sup>380</sup>

His work has been endorsed by Blaiklock, Hemer and van Elderen.<sup>381</sup> In this regard it is significant that prior to his own presence in the narrative Luke's chronological references are minimal. After his appearance they suddenly increase.<sup>382</sup> This would indicate that he did not fabricate such evidence, and the accuracy which is evident from those areas where he can be tested is a good indication that he is also accurate where he cannot be tested. There are some indications that the primitive Jewish community portrayed in Acts has links with the Qumran literature.<sup>383</sup>

Another area where Luke can be tested is his use of Mark. Redaction-critical scholars have discovered that Luke has subjected his sources to a stylistic revision. He has arranged his Markan and non-Markan material in alternating blocks. In terms of order he has followed Mark rather closely. He has not taken over much of Mark's distinctive theology. He has of-

ten inserted his own ideas into the narrative. He has also tended to Hellenise Mark. However, despite these tendencies to freely adopt the form of Mark's narrative, in terms of essential content of the narrative he has changed remarkably little. The oft-quoted remark of F.C. Burkitt has aptly stated the situation: *'what concerns us here is not that Luke has changed so much but that he has invented so little'*.<sup>384</sup>

Where we are able to test his use of Q it seems that the same applies (i.e. it seems that he has followed Q in the travel narrative, Lk. 9:51-18:14). Such conclusions do not give the impression that Luke has in any way failed to live up to his intentions as stated in the prologue (Lk. 1:1-4).

As regards the speeches in Acts it should be said at the outset that it is completely out of place to expect a deposit of eye-witness *'shorthand'* summaries of the original sermons. The question is whether Luke has substantially reproduced the content of what was originally said. Here only a few brief comments must suffice. Luke was capable of writing good Greek. His style in many of the speeches is inferior to the narrative. This indicates that he may have depended on Aramaic tradition.<sup>385</sup> Against this it cannot be argued that the presence of Lucan terminology and style in these speeches is evidence that Luke created them. Luke has thoroughly rewritten his sources throughout his work and it is not necessary to find Semitisms in order to accept that Luke was using primitive tradition.<sup>386</sup> Luke bears witness to the frequent use of testimonia in the early sermons. However, unlike Matthew, he does not even use this method in his own writing. In this regard the thesis of B. Lindars, that Acts 2:25-31 represents a use of testimonia which Luke himself could not have understood, is significant.<sup>387</sup> A primitive Christology may be expressed in the earliest speeches. The objection that all the speeches in Acts, including those of Paul and Peter, follow a Lucan literary thereotype has some validity, but need not be stated in such a manner so as to deny the primitive elements in the speeches.<sup>388</sup> Further the speeches are very much in character with the speakers and the situations. Thus Paul's address to the Athenians may be compared with his appeal to natural revelations in Rom. 1:19f.: the defence of Stephen is full of O.T. reminiscences, and Paul's last address to the elders at Ephesus has many correspondences with the terminology of the letters to the churches.<sup>389</sup> In addition one cannot deduce as a general fact that Hellenistic writers created speeches to be placed in the narrative for creative purposes. At least in the case of Thucydides, he attempted to adhere *'as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said'*. In the light of Luke's use of Mark and Q there is no reason to doubt that his method would have been more in line with Thucydides than other Hellenistic historians.<sup>390</sup> Thus *'the fact remains that they fit remarkably well into their contexts, and they do the task which they are required to do for the hearers at each stage in the narrative.'*<sup>391</sup>

Against these objective criteria the arguments of Hans Conzelmann and Ernst Haenchen must be termed relatively subjective, since they deal with a particular interpretation of Luke's theology.<sup>392</sup> Much has been written of their views. We may note a few criticisms. Firstly a great deal of weight is placed upon the theology of the delay, if we may so define it. These scholars tend to base their entire system upon this assumption.<sup>393</sup> But it is not at all certain that the early church was so preoccupied with this problem.<sup>394</sup> It seems in fact that the problem is more in the minds of those who have connected the idea of immediacy with existential decision, which is admittedly a concern of twentieth century philosophy.<sup>395</sup> We may refer here to the arguments which Howard Marshall has brought against this position.<sup>396</sup> Secondly, far too much weight is placed upon far too few scriptures in the establishment of the three epochs.<sup>397</sup> Thirdly, it may well be the case if Oscar Cullmann is right, that Luke's so-called Heilsgeschichte view of history is in fact the view of the early church, including Jesus himself. Cullmann's analysis of the biblical view of history has many similarities with Conzelmann's interpretation of the Lucan idea of the 'middle time'. Cullmann states without compromise that it is a 'false assumption that the redemptive history is only an external framework which the Christian faith can unhesitatingly discard.'<sup>398</sup>

In reality that which then remains as alleged 'kernel' is not at all a particularly characteristic feature of the Christian revelation. Far from having historicised the primitive kerygma, Luke may in fact be completely correct in his view of history.<sup>399</sup>

Fourthly, it is far from certain that Luke is devoid of an eschatological emphasis. Leon Morris strongly opposes this idea. He says: 'It seems a misreading of the evidence to see Luke as uninterested in eschatology'.<sup>400</sup>

Fifthly, the so-called 'early Catholicism' of Luke is carefully examined by C.K. Barrett and his resulting definition of the term removes all idea of a misinterpretation of the apostolic rule, of the sacramentalising of the church's worship, and the institutionalising of the church's authority structure.

*For Luke the apostles are essentially witnesses ...There is nothing in his treatment of this subject to suggest that Luke had any ecclesiastical axe to grind,...it can scarcely be maintained that Luke's view of the sacraments represents the church as purveying salvation along official sacramental channels.*<sup>401</sup>

Sixthly, one of the essential weaknesses of Conzelmann's approach to Lucan theology is

his almost total neglect of the infancy narrative. He states that ;

*In the present structure the birth story is inserted before the account of the baptism, and as regards its significance it is in fact a doublet. In the structure as it stands the birth story does not introduce one of the three phrases, but forms a preliminary scene of manifestation for the whole of the gospel.*

His comments on Lk. 1-2 are few and rather brief.<sup>402</sup>

In view of the problems attached to the positions of Conzelmann and Haechen, we can conclude that the basic accuracy of Luke as an historian of the first century and a theologian of the early church is well attested.<sup>403</sup> We have already noted that Luke probably had the benefit of information from James, the Lord's brother, as to the tradition of Christ's infancy. To this we may add one last point. The proto-Luke hypothesis has not been entirely accepted. It does produce certain difficulties. However, it still remains a possibility and according to Howard Marshall, *'the less ambitious form of the theory stands proven, namely that Q and L were combined before they found their way into Luke'*.<sup>404</sup> If Luke is to be dated before A.D. 70, and if Luke collected the sources behind Q and L before he made use of the Markan material (dating earlier than the writing of Luke), it means that the origin of L, including the infancy narrative, must be pushed back well before A.D. 70, (i.e. to between A.D. 50 and 60 or at least between A.D. 60 and 65).<sup>405</sup> This consideration is fatal to the *'theologumenal'* hypothesis regarding the virginal conception, which we have already referred to, and tends to substantiate the other arguments in favour of the early Palestinian origin of the infancy tradition in Luke. Finally, the way in which Luke makes use of his sources and his approach to history in general, which has become evident from this discussion, makes it very difficult to accept the extreme form of the *'midrashic'* theory. It becomes difficult to assume that Luke was not narrating a basically historical series of events. The last consideration leads to the next topic.

## THE INFANCY NARRATIVES AND MIDRASHIC METHOD

Up till this point the question of the use of the Jewish midrashic method in the infancy narratives has been dealt with inductively. The proposed midrashic nature of each pericope has been examined in turn. The examination so far has led to the conclusion that this theory creates considerable problems and that if Matthew and Luke did use this method at all, the method had been radically changed and Christianised. For this latter method we used the term *'Christian midrash'* as opposed to *'Jewish midrash'*. This question must now be examined from a more general point of view. What exactly is meant by the term

*midrash*? Does a clear definition exist and do the infancy narratives partake of the genre in any way?

During the nineteenth century much of the ancient Rabbinical material became available, but little was done to carefully examine the nature of the material and the study of such material was not systematised. During the first half of the twentieth century the study of Rabbinical literature became steadily more systematic, and the turning point in the special area of midrashic literature came with the work of René Bloch. In particular her article on *midrash* in the *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* and her *Note méthodologique pour l'étude de la littérature rabbinique* gave a new synthesis to the history of the development of Rabbinical interpretation. René Bloch described Rabbinical midrash as follows:

1. *Its point of departure is Scripture; it is a reflection or meditation on the Bible.*
2. *It is homiletical and largely originated from the liturgical reading of the Torah.*
3. *It makes a punctilious analysis of the text, with the object of illuminating any obscurities found there.*
4. *The biblical message is adapted to suit contemporary needs.*
5. *According to the nature of the biblical text, the midrash either tries to discover the basic principles inherent in the legal section... (halakhah); or it sets out to find the true significance of events mentioned in the narrative sections of the Pentateuch (hagadah).<sup>406</sup>*

Her work certainly placed the subject in a systematic area for the first time. However in one sense her position has led to real difficulties. Her primary concern was not so much the definition of the literary genre midrash, but the description of the origins and historical development of Rabbinical literature in general. As a result her definition of midrash is very broad. It tends to encompass the entire system of Rabbinical interpretation. Thus for instance the third and fourth points mentioned above could be used to describe almost any form of biblical exegesis. The result has been that subsequent scholars have veered off into different definitions of midrash which all stem from René Bloch's work, but which are now so diverse that the word has come to have very little meaning. Addison G. Wright has discovered some nine different uses of the term, *'Indeed'*, he says, *'if some of the definitions are correct, large amounts, if not the whole Bible, would have to be called midrash'*, including the body of the gospel itself.<sup>407</sup> Clearly a more limited definition of the term is required. Another problem is that no distinction is often made between midrash as a particular corpus of literature dating from a particular period, and the actual literary form which is midrashic. In the case of the former, a large amount of general literary material is included which is not specifically midrashic. To use such a definition of the term is to include a great diversity of literary forms. Wright has attempted to answer the need for a clear



definition in a detailed study of the subject in two articles, (based on his doctoral dissertation).<sup>408</sup> It is most unfortunate that N.T. scholars involved in the study of the infancy narrative have not taken sufficient note of Wright's work. He gives a thorough investigation of the history of the term itself, and examines the origin, content, purpose, techniques and characteristics of the midrashic tradition. After a careful definition of the method he then examines various examples of pre-Rabbinic literature to determine the extent to which they may be regarded as part of the midrashic genre. His study includes the Passover Haggadah, the Qumran Pesarim, the Palestinian Targums, the Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo, the Genesis Apocryphon and various other documents. It is not necessary to repeat his thorough work. A number of salient points will be repeated.

The term *midrash* is derived originally from 2 Chron. 13:22 and 2 Chron. 24:27. The term literally means to '*seek*' and seems to have moved from the initial connotation of '*narrative*' to '*study*', '*inquire*', '*investigate*', and hence '*interpret*'. It was used at Qumran without clear definition, and even in classical Rabbinical literature the term was never technically defined. Historically the method arose during the post-exilic period when the Torah became the canonical scripture of Judaism. By the time the final redaction was made there was quite evidently a gap between the original injunctions and the lives of post-exilic Jews. This called for a method of interpretation which could bridge the gap and make the text meaningful to the present.

Three types of *midrashim* are to be found. Firstly, the exegetical *midrashim* consist of a verse by verse commentary on the biblical text together with cross references to other verses, the quotation of various rabbis, and the particular circumstances in which comment was made.<sup>409</sup> Secondly, the homiletic *midrashim* tend to be rather more devotional than exegetical. They probably arose from synagogue services. Here the discussion of the text is rather more extended and greater creative freedom takes place. Thirdly the narrative *midrashim* involve an actual rewriting of the biblical text with the addition of legends and non-biblical traditions. In both the latter types however the starting point is always the biblical text. The technique of commenting on the text may be either a creative historiography or a creative philology. In the case of the former the intention is to make the biblical narrative more attractive, edifying and intelligible to the listener. This can easily merge into good story telling. In the case of the latter, deductions are made from the minute details of the text. Since the Torah is the word of God, it is held to contain a multitude of meanings which may even be discovered in the numerical value of the word. In this latter sense the midrashic method developed into the Cabalah.<sup>410</sup>

The special characteristics of this genre are as follows. The starting point of the exercise is always the text of scripture. This operates as the motivation point from which the process

of interpretation begins. *'Midrash then, is a literature about a literature'*.<sup>411</sup> The technique itself involves a process of deduction from the original text to the contemporary situation, story or legend. The way in which this sequence of thought develops from the text is not important. The text must somehow be shown to be the starting point of the whole endeavour. This method is not confined to Jewish literature. The same method is attested in Egyptian literature as well. If it can be found in Christian literature it must conform to the basic pattern.<sup>412</sup> Various non-Midrashic pieces of literature have often been confused with midrash due to lack of understanding of various important distinctions which emerge from the study of this genre. The fact that an O.T. scripture is cited does not necessarily mean that the literature is midrashic. Either the text may be quoted to make a contribution to a new composition or the new composition may be written as a contribution in the text of scripture. The two should not be confused.

*Thus, we see that in biblical citation two directions of movement are possible, either a biblical text contributes to the new composition and is for the sake of the new composition or the new composition contributes to an understanding of the text cited and is for the sake of the biblical citation. Only the latter is midrash since only there does the composition actualise Scripture.*<sup>413</sup>

Three forms of literature have been confused with midrash, firstly anthological literature, secondly redaction or glossing, and thirdly apocalyptic. The first form is particularly important for us because it seems the closest parallel to the infancy narrative. With this type of literature the expressions, ideas and terminology of biblical passages are alluded to, borrowed, adapted and transformed so as to become part of a new composition. Often meditation has been involved. The motivation for this may be simply to speak the language of holy writ, or to show that the new compositions are part of the biblical tradition. Often a mosaic of biblical citations is welded together into a new *'patchwork'* design which then becomes an entirely new pattern. This form has been called *'allusive'* theology. A typical example is Prov. 1-9. Here words and phrases have been taken over from the Pentateuch and the prophetic literature so as to indicate that the wisdom being written is within the tradition of the more ancient writings. No particular texts are used as the starting point of the composition.

The infancy narratives are closely related to anthological or allusive theology. For instance the Lucan psalms are a mosaic of biblical quotations, but

*by no stretch of imagination could they be conceived of as in any way being written for the benefit of the original text or even of*

*some of the text...the way they are cited indicate that it is a case of prior texts serving as a source and providing terminology and atmosphere for a new work.* <sup>414</sup>

With both Matthew and Luke the starting point of the narrative is the attempt to interpret the significance of the Person of Christ. <sup>415</sup> The use of Matthew's quotation of the O.T. in the body of his gospel demonstrates that the event of Christ is always the starting point and that O.T. allusions and citations are subservient to this event. Wright then goes on to suggest that the infancy narratives are not simply anthological literature either. They have a great similarity with infancy narrative in general. Perhaps they should best be defined as simply infancy narratives.

This conclusion is perhaps the best. The matter is really one of terminology. Either the infancy narratives are midrash of a particular type; inverted or Christian midrash, or they are not midrash at all. They are infancy narratives which have been expressed in anthological form. They are certainly not Jewish midrash proper. <sup>416</sup>

Does this mean that the infancy narratives can be termed historical narratives in any sense? This all depends upon one's definition of history. If by history we mean either positivistic history or scientific history, or history written from a materialistic world view, then they are clearly not history. <sup>417</sup> However, if it is allowed that the ancient prophetic-biblical view of history is a form of history (i.e. following Pannenberg and Montgomery as against Collingwood and Bultmann), then the infancy narratives are historical due to the fact that they stand within the Biblical historical tradition. It is no criticism to say that they regard the course of history as the outworking of a divine plan of promise and fulfilment. The eschatological view of history has been shown by scholars such as Oscar Cullmann, John Montgomery and Wolfhart Pannenberg to lie at the very basis of the Western view of historical progress. Neither is it legitimate criticism to say that the evangelists approach the event from a certain point of view, i.e. from the presupposition of faith. Every historian ultimately begins with some world view (whether it be submerged Marxist materialism as in the case of E.H. Carr, or the biblico-eschatological world view as in the case of Pannenberg and the biblical writers). The difference between modern historiography and Matthean historiography is that the former attempts to be unbiased and attempts to be critical while the latter is always written from faith to faith and is not always very critical. The infancy narratives are part of the gospel literature and accordingly are written from the point of view of evangelical historiography. The infancy narratives have the added dimension of being anthological or allusive theological historiography. Perhaps it may be retorted that the terms '*allusive-theology*' and '*historiography*' are mutually exclusive. However this distinction is one that Luke would not have accepted. To quote Howard Marshall; '*because he (i.e. Luke) was a theologian he*

*had to be a historian*'.<sup>418</sup> Clearly for Luke, and the same can be said for Matthew, history and theology could not be separated.<sup>419</sup> His writing of history was an act of interpretation, but the interpretation could not exist except as an interpretation of particular historical events. It would be meaningless for him if we objected that, to the extent that interpretation had taken place, to that extent history has been distorted. Luke deliberately set out to write the truth. Nevertheless the truth he wrote was, he believed, about certain events which had been '*fulfilled*' (πεπληροφορημενων Lk.1.1) amongst the early disciples. By using this word he alludes to the clearly eschatological character of the events as having revelatory significance. By the use of ακριβως and πληρωω Luke dissociates himself from the Kantian distinction between facts and meaning. He would never have accepted such a philosophical distinction, and neither would Matthew. We shall not at this point discuss whether their understanding of history caused them to narrate objective historical events. One issue which may be used to impugn the historicity of these narratives is the relationship which they bear to each other. If serious contradictions can be found then obviously their historical probability must be called in question.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INFANCY NARRATIVES OF MATTHEW AND LUKE.

It is unfortunately true that this issue has rather stagnated since the scholarly writings of men such as Vincent Taylor, Douglas Edwards, Adolf von Harnack and Gresham Machen. Modern scholars tend to take up dogmatic positions and simply reproduce conclusions of previous generations. There do not seem to be any fresh arguments in this field. Thus for instance Raymond Brown states that the '*basic stories are outwardly irreconcilable...They agree in so few details that we may say with certainty that they cannot both be historical in toto*'. As a basis for this comment he notes the discrepancy between Matt. 2:14 and Luke 2:39, the two genealogies, the problem of where the family (particularly Joseph) actually resided and the fact that the two narratives tell a different story (i.e. details in Luke are not found in Matthew and vice versa).<sup>420</sup> Joseph Fitzmyer similarly refers to '*their basically different stories about the infancy of Jesus*'.<sup>421</sup> As regards the genealogy E.L. Abel begins a recent discussion of the subject with the comment that, '*Today, however, the various attempts of harmonising the genealogies are regarded as being rather fanciful*'.<sup>422</sup> In the remainder of his article he explores the possibility of the Lucan genealogy reflecting a tradition to the effect that Jesus was a prophetic Messiah, and that as such his genealogy must have come through Nathan, the son of David, who was confused with Nathan the prophet in esoteric Jewish literature. However, he notes himself that this particular Jewish tradition is much too late and none of the other evidence he mentions is at all decisive. On the other

hand in an article on the genealogies in the New Bible Dictionary, F.F. Bruce endorses the arguments of Gresham Machen.<sup>423</sup> Clark H. Pinnock examines the difficulties presented by the genealogies and states that *'assuming no colossal mistake in either gospel, two solid explanations are possible'*. The theory that Luke traces the genealogy through Mary contains the difficulty that one would have expected Luke to have been more explicit. *'It is however, clearly possible, and would provide a simple solution of the problem of the double genealogy.'* The other possibility, that of Levirate descent as advocated by Gresham Machen has the *'chief weakness of...a series of happy coincidences required to make it function'*. However, having considered both possibilities he concludes that *'enough is known...to show that the apparent discrepancy between the two genealogies is not insoluble'*.<sup>424</sup> Both Howard Marshall and Leon Morris make use of Gresham Machen's work, but do not attempt to bring the issue to a conclusion.<sup>425</sup>

It must be admitted that the two genealogies still present an insoluble problem. It is true that the proposed solutions are possible. However historical-criticism could never term these solutions probable. Ultimately, in view of our lack of information at this point in time, the full acceptance of these genealogies must depend upon a belief in the inspiration of scripture, which belief of course will differ from individual to individual and from theological tradition to theological tradition. One cannot say for certain that the two genealogies are demonstrably irreconcilable. Given the problem, does this mean that the two entire infancy narratives must be fictional? Such a conclusion is surely unwarranted. It would seem far better to adopt the position of Albright and Mann that the two genealogies were received from the tradition and inserted by the evangelists in good faith. Attempts to prove the numerical symbolism of Luke's genealogy are not very convincing and consequently it is not possible to hold that Luke was merely *'theologising'*. The genealogies cannot be used as a vital argument in the discussion of the historicity of the narratives.

What then are the *'basic differences'*, and the *'irreconcilable'* problems, in the relationship between the narratives, which lead to the conclusion that *'they agree in so few details that we may say with certainty that they cannot be historical in toto'*.<sup>426</sup> The discrepancy between Lk. 2:39 and Matt. 2:11 has already been dealt with and it was concluded that the problem does not really influence the historical value of the narratives. Apart from this are there then no other problems? Odd as it may sound, after such strong statements, there are in fact no other serious problems. The different emphases on the place of residence need hardly be forced into an insurmountable contradiction. The same applies to the fact that two narratives are told from a different point of view.<sup>427</sup>

This makes the reiteration of the *'irreconcilable'* nature of the infancy narratives sound rather hollow. It seems most strange that serious scholarship should make such a large issue out of these rather meagre problems, especially since the relationship between the two narratives is still considered to be a strong reason for the rejection of their historicity. We may reply that if such problems can prove a document to be completely unreliable then our knowledge of the historical past must vanish into the small collection of *'undeniable facts'* which are held to be *'overwhelming probabilities'*. The result must be historical scepticism. It might be replied that there are two other serious difficulties. One may quote the *'insuperable difficulty'* discovered by D.F. Strauss. In Matthew the announcer of the revelation is called *'the angel of the Lord'* in Luke he is called *'Gabriel'*. In Matthew he comes to Joseph, in Luke to Mary etc.<sup>428</sup> Strauss calls these *'contradictions'*. If such differences are called *'contradictions'*, one has to ask the meaning of the word *'contradiction'*. It is obvious that these differences are due to a different story altogether. Why two people involved in a momentous event must experience it in exactly the same way with exactly the same detail of experience, is not easy to understand. Why then use the word *'contradiction'* to describe what really amounts to independence? Against this meagre collection of problems is the long list of essential agreements which various scholars have often repeated. They need not be mentioned here.<sup>429</sup>

We conclude that the problems raised by the comparison of the two infancy narratives are not such as to impugn the historicity of the accounts. It is also noticable that the argument from silence continues to be used by scholars. Both Raymond Brown and Joseph Fitzmyer give considerable space to this argument, though admittedly their statements are rather more guarded than previous scholars.<sup>430</sup> We will not venture to become involved once more in the long debate. The issues were thoroughly stated in the second chapter. At this point we may say that the arguments from both sides tend to cancel each other out. If anything the argument from silence has been shown to be precarious. It certainly cannot be legitimately used to decide upon the historicity of the infancy narratives. We would reverse Brown's conclusion that the argument *tends* to support the theologumenal hypothesis. If anything the evidence of the remainder of the N.T. *tends* to support the historicity of the infancy narratives. The arguments of Douglas Edwards, Gresham Machen and Manuel Migeuens are to our view more convincing than those of Vincent Taylor, Joseph Fitzmyer and Raymond Brown.<sup>431</sup>

## CONCLUSION CONCERNING THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

In bringing this discussion to a close we must briefly discuss a question of critical method.

In examining the infancy narratives a number of '*sources*' will often be presented. These include O.T. stories which seem to run parallel to the infancy narratives (i.e. Herod-Pharaoh typology), various O.T. texts and words (mentioned by the midrashic school of interpretation), Messianic and eschatological ideas in pre-Christian Judaism (i.e. the Qumran writings), Christian post-resurrection terminology, Christian post-resurrection Christological developments (i.e. the reading back of Rom. 1:4 to Christ's baptism and then his birth) and finally the presence of specifically Lucan or Matthean theological emphases. On the basis of these '*sources*' and influences one can '*explain*' almost everything in the infancy narratives. This identification of '*sources*' is agreed upon, to greater or lesser extent, by all scholars, and we have accepted this method. However the conclusions that can be drawn from such data are a different matter. An easy, and to our understanding, a simplistic conclusion, is to term all parts of the infancy narratives which can thus be '*explained*', as non-historical. Only those parts which remain after all these sources have been investigated are possibly the result of historical tradition. This approach is used consistently by Raymond Brown in his monumental work. This method is very similar to the negative use of the traditio-historical principle in the search for the historical Jesus. What can be ascribed to either the early church or first century Judaism cannot be allowed to Jesus. An illogical leap is often made in this method. One begins with the assertion that what cannot be ascribed to either the early church or contemporary Judaism is probably to be ascribed to Jesus and then discovers that this assertion has been silently transformed into another assertion, namely, that what can be attributed to the early church or Judaism is probably not historical. This method or criterion for authenticity has been rightly criticised by a number of scholars.<sup>432</sup>

In the case of the infancy narratives we may use a simple illustration. A builder may gather a large collection of bricks, cement, sand, wood, roofing materials etc., which would be sufficient to build an entire house. But the mere collection of such materials does not produce a house. The materials must be put together in a particular way. The completed building will consist, not just of bricks and mortar etc., but of building materials plus an architect's plan plus the action of the builder. In the case of the infancy narratives the mere collection of O.T. parallels, intertestamental ideas, post-resurrection Christian terminology, Lucan theology and Matthean theology, does not '*explain*' the infancy narratives. There has been another '*cause*' which is responsible for the present coherent story. This may be the imagination of the Christian community. It may be the brilliant expression of Lucan and Matthean theology. It may equally, or more probably, be an historical tradition. The use of this rather simplistic method in the infancy narratives recalls the '*god of the gaps*' response by conservative theologians to the encroachment of evolutionary science. The either /or which is posed by this method is not at all necessary. We therefore cannot agree with many of Raymond Brown's historiographical conclusions.<sup>433</sup>

This discussion has shown that there are no good or objective reasons for denying the historicity of the infancy narratives. It has also shown that both evangelists believed they were handling reliable tradition, and that the sources, (whether oral or written or both) behind the infancy narratives are derived from the early Palestinian Christian community. With Luke the case for an eye-witness tradition is quite possible. A negative verdict on historicity is then excluded. Does this mean that on purely historical grounds we can come to a clearly positive verdict, i.e. that we can positively state that these narratives are historical? Here the final estimation is still best expressed in the words of Charles Gore.

*The historical evidence...is not such as to compel belief. There are ways to dissolve its force. To produce belief there is needed ...besides cogent evidence, also a perception of the meaning and naturalness, under the circumstances, of the event to which evidence is born. To clinch the historical evidence there is needed the sense, that being what He was. His human birth could hardly have been otherwise than is implied in the virginity of His mother.* <sup>434</sup>

This point will be discussed further in the last chapter. The verdict of Karl Barth, who takes note of the critical problems is similarly balanced.

*It certainly cannot be denied that outward, explicit evidence for the dogma in the statement of Holy Scripture is hedged about by questions. But still less can it be asserted that the questions raised are so hard to answer that one is forced by exegesis to contest the dogma.* <sup>435</sup>

Both these comments are concerned with the doctrine of the virgin birth. However, in treating that doctrine both scholars have grappled with the infancy narratives in general. Their conclusion can serve as a fitting statement of the historicity of the narratives in general. The evidence will not compel belief on a historiographical level. The narratives are hedged about with questions. But none of the difficulties are so great as to impugn the historicity of the accounts. Historical scholarship on its own can go so far and no further. Sweeping statements beyond this point are precarious, either on the side of historical scepticism or apologetics. However, given the 'Theology of the Resurrection' and, in the case of Montgomery's theology, given the inductive inspiration of the scriptures, the infancy narratives can be positively accepted as bearing witness to objective events. This last verdict goes beyond the field of historical-criticism and enters into the field of theological belief, or Christian historical belief. This last term will be discussed in the last chapter.





## CHAPTER FIVE

## AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

In the previous chapter the major critical problems attached to these narratives were dealt with, and an attempt was made to answer the historiographical question. The conclusion was made that both Matthew and Luke were interested in recording events, but that their historical method was of a particular type which needed to be carefully defined. We also concluded that this particular type of historical writing is concerned with more than the facts, that history and theology are regarded as inseparable complements of one whole. Here and there the theological message of the writers was mentioned. However, the critical and historical issues were our main concern. This means that the essential theological proclamation of these narratives has not yet been examined. Before this enquiry is taken any further, it ought to be pointed out that the majority of commentaries and scholarly articles on the infancy narratives do not go very far beyond the point we have reached so far. In most cases the kind of issues which were dealt with in the previous chapter and the kind of questions that were put to the text are regarded as being the entire task of critical exegesis. Beyond that it becomes a matter of homiletics. It is true that the 'midrashic' school of interpreters have ventured to go further than the purely historical-critical issues. However, in this case, a large question about the method remains unanswered and one cannot be sure that the end result is not very far removed from the intentions of the original authors. Is there then a way ahead which, while avoiding the pitfalls of 'midrashic' exegesis, nevertheless progresses beyond the purely historical-critical issues? The essential point of this thesis is that there is such a way ahead and its basic contribution is to investigate that exegetical possibility. Before this exegesis begins, one ought also to say that if no such possibility exists then the infancy narratives have not yet been truly understood and their essential theological message has never truly been heard. This is because after all the critical exegetical work has been done, it is clear that the narratives have not been allowed to speak for themselves. To deal with such questions as, '*what was the nature of Luke's historiography?*' or, '*are the Lucan psalms the product of Luke's own mind rather than the product of the early Palestinian community?*' or, '*how did Luke make use of the Old Testament in his reconstruction of the infancy tradition?*' is not really to listen to the text itself. When all these critical issues have been answered ( and when will they all be finally answered?) the real concern of the authors of these narratives has not yet been investigated.

In the past this question was answered dogmatically. Surely, it was said, the real subject of these narratives is the virgin birth. While this enquiry has not rejected the historicity of the virgin birth, and while that subject has received a certain amount of attention, we must say that the virgin birth is **not** the central concern of these narratives. Purely from the statistical perspective, the number of verses that deal with this subject are minimal. Some scholars have even ventured to suggest that in the case of Luke, the removal of a few minor interpolations would remove the subject from the narrative altogether. This hypothesis is not acceptable. But it illustrates that the doctrine of the virgin birth cannot be regarded as the central concern of these narratives.<sup>1</sup> For instance, the apologetic work of Gresham Machen is one of the most thorough treatments of the infancy narratives that has been written. A life-time of exacting research is expressed in the pages of this book. Yet at the end of such a thorough work one cannot say that the infancy narratives have been allowed to speak for themselves.

In this regard it is most gratifying to see the direction of the most recent research which has come about as a result of the redaction-critical method. With the contributions of Oliver, Barnes Tatum, Paul Minear and Howard Marshall the infancy narratives are, in greater measure, allowed to speak for themselves.<sup>2</sup> However, even here, if too much attention is paid to the actual redaction of the tradition, the text will be unable to speak. This was illustrated in the work of Davis, who approached the Matthean infancy narrative with a strong redactional concern. When his task was completed, we were left with what he regarded as the original pre-redactional tradition. However, neither the theological contribution of the original tradition, nor of the redactional product was investigated. Despite this criticism of redactional method, the starting point of this thesis is to be found in the contributions of the redaction critics, especially Paul Minear and Howard Marshall.

It may be answered at this point that it is not the task of N.T. research to go beyond such issues; that beyond this point one must move into the area of exposition and homiletics. This is surely to evade the issue. It may not be the task of critical exegesis to go beyond this point, but it is certainly the task of biblical theology to do so. Further, the whole purpose of critical exegesis is to prepare the way for biblical theology, which then seeks to understand the original theological intentions of the author. In fact, what we may call the '*theological-critical exegesis*' of the infancy narratives, becomes a vital task. It is at this point that structural analysis becomes a useful exegetical tool. With structural exegesis the actual text is examined at face value (or on the level of the '*manifestation*' of its '*meaning effect*'). Its various parts are discussed in terms of their structural inter-relationships. The text is not '*dissected*' in order to discover the development of the various traditions, or the redactional activities of the editor. It is '*decomposed*' into its constituent parts and then '*recomposed*' in

such a way that its underlying or 'deep' structure is revealed. These statements reflect a number of methodological assumptions that are present in structuralism and it is therefore necessary to give some clarification. This is important, firstly because structuralism is new to N.T. studies, and secondly because it is so diverse in its definition and application that some description must be given of the way in which it will be applied in this study.

## STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Our discussion of structuralism will include a general description of the concepts used and a rather more involved consideration of some of the methodological issues. This will be followed by a structural analysis of the infancy narratives.<sup>3</sup>

### Structural Concepts

#### 1. The Text as a Vehicle of Communication

Structuralists stress the fact that language is a sign system or semiotic structure which is a means of communication. In semiotic systems of communication in general one is always dealing with three factors; the sender, the message and the receiver. In linguistic systems one is dealing with author, text and reader.<sup>4</sup> Traditional approaches to the N.T. have always focused attention mainly on the first and third factors. All the traditional methods of investigation, historical-criticism, source-criticism, form-criticism and redaction-criticism focus attention on the author, his *Sitz im Leben*, the language available to him at the time, the particular historical situation that he sought to address, and the various factors that influenced him in his writing. The results of such methods have, unfortunately, not illuminated the text in many cases, but have rather blurred its true significance. Structuralism has reacted strongly to this emphasis, and focuses its attention entirely on the text as it stands, without reference to genetic or external factors. Some structuralists have gone so far as to say that the structure of a text must be studied without any reference to its author's semantic intentions.<sup>5</sup> The Russian and Czechoslovakian schools have emphasised the autonomy of the text and the '*intrinsic immanent laws of literature*' that are to be examined before any other questions are asked.<sup>6</sup> This takes the structural emphasis too far, but,

*one must ask ... whether historical exegesis which sought "objectivity" by situating the biblical text in a life-situation of its time, has been so successful that another way of approach which situates the text in its set or system may not be a helpful corrective for working objectively with the texts.*<sup>7</sup>

This question must be answered positively. Historical-criticism has not produced all the answers. The approach which focuses its attention on the third factor (reader) is associated with the hermeneutical methods of existentialism. The work of Bultmann and subsequently the 'new hermeneutic' is representative of this approach. This approach has problems of its own, particularly for those not inclined to the phenomenology of Heidegger. To many N.T. scholars, the excessive subjectivism of this approach is a serious problem. Structuralism provides a different option to biblical studies.

*As such, structuralism is a philosophical option which is to the area Text what phenomenology is to the area Reader and historicism or positivism could be to the area of Author.*<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Diachronic and Synchronic Analysis of the Text

Closely related to what we have just discussed is the theoretical distinction first introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure between diachronic and synchronic analysis.<sup>9</sup> This distinction was first applied in the area of linguistics and later applied to the study of narrative. Saussure emphasised that language is a system which can only be understood in its total existence rather than in terms of its particular parts. Words have meaning only because of their context in the particular sentence, and phonemes only have meaning in relation to the particular morphological position they take in the system. This is because there is no necessary connection between the linguistic sign (signifier) and that which it signifies (the signified, or concept). The connection is completely arbitrary and has meaning only in the position it has in the system of signs.<sup>10</sup> This distinction can be extended to the level of a sentence, text (pericope) or narrative. Diachronic analysis must be regarded therefore as secondary to synchronic analysis. The particular history of a word, and its etymological origins, cannot be regarded as decisive to its meaning. On the contrary, its place in context is decisive to its meaning. Diachronic analysis is that which 'compares languages or meanings at two different stages', i.e. it focuses attention on the evolutionary aspect of a word or text. Synchronic analysis 'takes a cross section of languages, meanings, peoples and cultures at a given point in time'.<sup>11</sup> In the area of linguistics, this insight has been ably defended by James Barr.<sup>12</sup> In our particular case, it is most helpful because after the historical origins of the infancy narratives have been thoroughly examined (diachronically), the meaning of the narratives still eludes us. Synchronic structural analysis provides the opportunity to explore the text from a different perspective. The results prove to be far more fruitful than the traditional approach.

### 3. *Deep and Surface Meanings in the Text.*

Levi-Strauss is perhaps best known for his distinction between '*conscious linguistic phenomena*' and their '*unconscious infrastructure*'. He studied this in the analysis of myths, where he discovered that certain habits or structures of the human mind repeat themselves in myths in a large number of cases. Often those who transmitted the myths did not themselves understand these unconscious structures.<sup>13</sup> Such structures are discovered by a synchronic study of narrative. A helpful illustration of this distinction is given by Levi-Strauss. If one views a landscape in terms of its surface structure, it appears to be a complex of different forms, hills, boulders, valleys, trees, etc. However, a geologist would look at the same landscape from a different perspective and would discover basic stratum under the surface which may be common to other landscapes with a different surface structure. In the same way '*underneath the surface world there runs a stratum that is basic and fundamental to the human race*'.<sup>14</sup> This insight has been used by Levi-Strauss in the area of anthropology and has consequently focused on particularly human ways of thinking. The question that arises for the biblical interpreter is whether such deep structures are to be found in the thinking of the biblical writers and whether there are not structures that are peculiar to the biblical material. In this case, the common factor would not be the human element so much as the redeemed-human element. In other words, are there not unconscious mental structures that are peculiar to the thinking of those men who stand within the tradition of redemptive history? This question can be answered affirmatively. In the last chapter, we noted Gerard Meaghers' study on the '*prophetic call narrative*'.<sup>15</sup> This is basically a literary approach to narratives. We must ask, if the O.T. contains a particular structure, whether the N.T. has a similar structure which is peculiar to itself. In this study we suggest that the N.T. does have such a structure. This has to do with fulfilled eschatology and the reactions of men to the eschatological event. This structure is not consciously described, but emerges again and again. It is particularly evident in the infancy narratives. It has many similarities with the '*prophetic call narrative*'. Structuralism frees the exegete from a narrow commitment to the surface grammatico-historical meaning of the text and enables him to discover those structures which carry in them the fundamental theological convictions of the N.T. writers. Once this '*deep*' structure has been discovered the exegete can then return to the surface meaning of the text with a key that opens up the surface text as well.

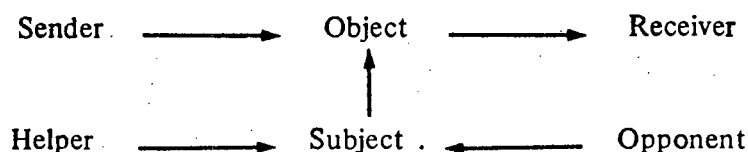
Also associated with Levi-Strauss is the model of binary oppositions. He believes that the basic structure in human thinking has to do with binary oppositions. In the area of anthropology this has to do with oppositions such as nature versus culture, raw versus cooked, up versus down, life versus death and heaven versus earth.<sup>16</sup> The extreme poles in human thinking (i.e. life versus death), are seldom reflected in the surface text, but are dealt with in terms of less extreme polar opposites that represent the absolute polar oppositions. For instance, life versus death may be expressed in terms of health versus sickness. This

principle has given rise to a particular structural model used by structuralists in their analytical method.<sup>17</sup> Again we must ask whether the binary oppositions common to man in general are not reflected in a particular set of oppositions common to those men who stand within the tradition of redemptive history? We suggest that the fundamental binary opposition for the N.T. writers is between the old age and the new age (eschatological fulfilment). This is again particularly evident in the infancy narratives.

#### 4. Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Text

Saussure was the first to emphasise that *'language is a self-contained system whose inter-dependent parts function and acquire value through their relationship to the whole'*.<sup>18</sup> This applies in two ways. Firstly, words have meaning due to their linear relationship. Secondly, words have meaning due to their relationship with other words of similar meaning which could be used to replace them in the text without radically altering its meaning. This he termed the paradigmatic relationship.<sup>19</sup> This principle can be extended from the field of linguistics to the field of narrative structures. It is helpful in revealing the deep structures of the text. The syntagmatic type of analysis has been used by Vladimir Propp in his morphological study of Russian fairy tales. In a large number of tales, he discovered a very small number of sequences and functions. The details may differ, but a basic number of sequences, character types and functions (or *motifemes*) were found to be common to them all.<sup>20</sup> The paradigmatic type of analysis has also proved to be useful in the study of narrative. Examples of this method, when applied to biblical texts, are demonstrated by R.C. Culley and Dan O. Via.<sup>21</sup> Syntagmatic and paradigmatic models will be used in our analysis of the infancy narratives.

A model which has been fruitful in the syntagmatic study of narrative has been developed by A.J. Greimas. This is termed the actantial model. Out of a large number of narratives a small number of constant spheres of action have been discovered. These are called '*actants*' and should be distinguished from the actors (i.e. characters) in a narrative. Greimas has reduced these actants to six, which can be represented in the following model.



The sender-object-receiver axis may be termed the axis of communication. The subject-object axis is the axis of volition, and the helper-subject-opponent axis is the axis of power. This model often proves to be helpful in the analysis of the dynamics of a narrative and enables the exegete to view a particular narrative against a universal model.<sup>22</sup> In this study the

actantial model will be used as an alternative to the paradigmatic/syntagmatic grid. Where both models substantiate essentially the same structural insights, we can be more certain of objectivity.

## 5. Semic Analysis of the Text

*A method of study which gives attention to the quality of the character is semic analysis. The character in a narrative is made up of the totality of the attributes which may be assigned to him directly or indirectly from the various lexias.*<sup>23</sup>

This study will focus on the main personages in the infancy narratives, namely Joseph, Herod, the Magi, Zechariah, Mary, the Shepherds, Simeon and Anna. The emphasis will fall on a particular aspect of their character, namely their reaction to the eschatological event. This is the emphasis in the way that they are presented in the narratives. Their meaning effect involves a corporate representation of various groups located in the early church.

## Structural Methodology

Since structural analysis is such a new discipline for biblical studies a few explanatory remarks are called for. It is difficult to define structuralism because as a method, or ideology, or both, it is used in such a wide field of disciplines, and in each case its use or definition is peculiar to the particular field. According to Thiselton;

*Structuralism concerns the operation of signs within a structured system, how these signs reciprocally condition one another, and how an underlying "code" determines the range of possibilities within which the signs operate.*<sup>24</sup>

Edgar V. McKnight finds the origins of structuralism in four areas; the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, the Russian formalists, the Czechoslovakian structuralists and the French structuralists, or 'new criticism'.<sup>25</sup> Along with de Saussure the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss is a vital factor, particularly in the development of the French school of structuralism.<sup>26</sup> According to McKnight the philosophy of Dilthey is largely responsible for the later developments of structural linguistics by de Saussure. Saussure in turn influenced the Russian and Czechoslovakian structuralists. Their ideas were extended into the field of anthropology by Lévi-Strauss and Noam Chomsky's work on generative grammar.<sup>27</sup>



Structuralism is used today in such diverse fields as anthropology, the study of folklore and myth, linguistics, poetics, logic and philosophy.<sup>28</sup> This use of structuralist techniques over a wide variety of disciplines has presented a problem. The problem has been stated by Jens Ihwe as follows;

*We must not forget that, up till now, the concept of narrative structure has only been defined rigorously (if at all) in individual disciplines; in folklore, mythology, and more recently, in the theory of literature. A definition of this concept on a more abstract level would indicate that certain subdivisions of those disciplines dealing with different kinds of texts could be determined automatically, i.e., the general theory specifies the predictable properties of each specialised textual theory. The construction of such a meta-theory of theories representing different types of texts will thus remain a challenging task, that however, is far from being accomplished.*<sup>28</sup>

An approach to such a general theory is to be found in the work of A.J. Greimas, due to the fact that he has drawn together the ideas of a number of structuralist thinkers in his general theory.<sup>30</sup> Suggestions in the same direction are given by Ihwe and W. Kummer but the problem presented by the diversity of the use of structural methods still remains.<sup>31</sup> If this problem faces the structuralist approach in general it can equally be said that as yet there has been no definite theory given to the use of structuralism in biblical studies. Here the discipline has even less definition than in other fields. To quote Vern Poythress, 'It is easy to see...that there is no such thing as the structuralist approach to literature or to a Biblical text.'<sup>32</sup>

Apart from the work of A.J. Greimas the most positive attempt to give a general theory of discourse analysis has been made by Paul Ricoeur in his *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*.<sup>33</sup> Ricoeur's work is valuable for two important reasons.

1. He has attempted to relate the study of discourse to the broader issues of scientific theory in general. In this his work has links with the approaches of J.W. Montgomery and Wolfhart Pannenberg, which we discussed in the third chapter. In that chapter we pointed out how Pannenberg believes that a basic unity of scientific method is possible for all disciplines. He attempts to overcome the cleavage between scientific and metaphysical language advocated by the linguistic philosophers. He argues that both the criterion of verification and the criterion of falsification, in the testing of scientific theories, are inadequate and do not truly reflect the nature of the scientific method. Following T.S. Kuhn he points out that scientific laws are not based upon the testing of repeatable events

but are actually tested by the ability of the different theories to explain the evidence at hand. He states, *'it appears from this that the ability to draw together and make sense of the available material is the principle criterion in the testing of scientific as well as historical hypotheses.'*<sup>34</sup>

In similar fashion Montgomery suggests that scientific theories are not tested by pure induction or deduction but by a mixture of both which he describes as *'abduction'*. Certain basic heuristic presuppositions must be used in all disciplines. These are used as a basis for truly empirical method, where theories are tested, but an essential element in the production of all theories is the intuitive flash, which is subjective. Where deduction proves what must be, and induction would demonstrate what actually is, abduction suggests what may be. It operates with probabilities rather than with either a priori or inductively demonstrated certainties. A further element of Montgomery's historiography is his belief in the public nature of historical events and the objectivity of their meaning. On these points both Montgomery and Pannenberg have been influenced to some extent by Karl Popper as well as the *'Vienna school.'*

Ricoeur makes statements which are very similar in emphasis, and again quotes the work of Karl Popper. Firstly, regarding the question of verification in the interpretation of texts, he discusses the element of guess-work which must enter into the interpreters role at some stage.

*As concerns the procedures for validation by which we test our guesses, I agree with E.D. Hirsch that they are closer to a logic of probability than a logic of empirical verification. To show that an interpretation is more probable in the light of what we know is something other than showing that a conclusion is true. So, in a veiled sense, validation is not verification. It is an argumentative discipline comparable to the juridical procedures used in legal interpretation, a logic of uncertainty and of qualitative probability.*<sup>35</sup>

Secondly, in the belief that a unitary form of approach is possible for both scientific and descriptive disciplines he says;

*It follows from this understanding of validation that we may give an acceptable sense to the opposition between the Naturwissenschaften and the Geisteswissenschaften... Such is the balance between the genius of guessing and the scientific character of*

*validation, which constitutes a modern presentation of the dialectic between verstehen and erklären.* <sup>36</sup>

Thirdly, as regards the objectivity of interpretation he says;

*to the procedures of validation there also belong procedures of invalidation similar to the criteria of falsifiability proposed by Karl Popper in his Logical Discovery. Here the role of falsification is played by the conflict between competitive interpretations. An interpretation must not only be probable, but more probable than other interpretations ...if it is true that there is always more than one way of construing a text, it is not true that all interpretations are equal. The text presents a limited field of possible constructions.* <sup>37</sup>

Ricoeur's epistemology in the area of narrative hermeneutics is therefore in line with the historical epistemology of biblical theologians we have relied upon in this thesis.

2. Following the first point, Ricoeur has managed to establish a balance between the subjectivity of the tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey and the objectivity of Saussure's structuralist theory.

Firstly, he rejects what he calls the '*psychologising conceptions of hermeneutics*' introduced by the Romanticist tradition.

*Hermeneutics as issuing from Schleiermacher and Dilthey tended to identify interpretation with the category of "understanding", and to define understanding as the recognition of an authors intention...This priority given to the authors intention and to the original audience tended, in turn, to make dialogue the model of every structure of understanding, thereby imposing the framework of intersubjectivity on hermeneutics...My attempt here is to call into question the assumptions of this hermeneutic...in order to release hermeneutics from its psychologising and existential prejudice.* <sup>38</sup>

On the other hand Saussure's linguistics can be described as an excessive objectifying of the hermeneutical task. Fundamental to Saussure is the distinction between *langue* and *parole*, where the former is elevated above the latter. While a message (*parole*) is individual, a code (*langue*) is collective. A message is temporal while a code is a synchronic system.

A message is arbitrary and contingent while a code is systematic and compulsory.

A further refinement of this distinction is the distinction between signifier and signified. In the synchronic system of signs all the relations are immanent to the system.

*In this sense semiotic systems are "closed", i.e. without relations to external, non-semiotic realities... Language no longer appears as a mediation between minds and things. It constitutes a world of its own, within which each item only refers to other items of the same system... At this extreme point language as discourse has disappeared.*<sup>39</sup>

A further element in the approach of Saussure is the elevation of semiotics to a universal theory of which semantics is but one small part. This leads to the reduction of the hermeneutical possibility, because the meaning of a text is considered to be of less importance than the structural inter-relations of the signs within the text. We may add to Ricoeur's complaint the fact that in many structuralist treatments of texts a vast amount of structural analysis often yields a minimal harvest of hermeneutically relevant data.

Ricoeur attempts to redress the emphasis placed on *langue* over *parole*. He prefers the term 'discourse' to *parole*. 'Our task', he says, 'will be to rescue discourse from its marginal and precarious exile.'<sup>40</sup> He does this by advocating a fundamental distinction between semantics and semiotics. While Saussure emphasises the synchronic system, i.e. *langue*, and therefore the concept of signs or semiotics, Ricoeur emphasises the event of discourse (or *parole*). While *langue*, as a self-contained or closed system of signs has little connection with the world of life, the event of discourse reaches out into the world in a meaningful way. Ricoeur elevates discourse above *langue* and semantics above semiotics. Semiotics is valid, but only as a part of semantics. He therefore reverses the priorities of Saussure, while not totally rejecting his concepts. He points out that the synchronic system is virtual, but not actual. 'The system in fact does not exist. It only has a virtual existence. Only the message gives actuality to language.'<sup>41</sup>

Ricoeur then proposes a distinction between event and meaning as vital to the understanding of language. To this he adds the distinction between 'utterer's meaning' and 'utterance meaning', from which he shows that the initial event can, through its being recorded in the message of discourse, be repeated again and again. Herein lies the dimension of discourse as communication, or dialogue. The dialogical structure of discourse can therefore overcome the fundamental solitude of each human being.

*My experience cannot become your ex-*

*perience... Yet, nevertheless, something passes from me to you. This something is not the experience, as experienced, but its meaning. Here is the miracle. The experience as experienced, as lived, remains private, but its sense, its meaning, becomes public.* <sup>42</sup>

As a further distinction he discusses the difference between 'sense' and 'reference'. Once again he shows how language as discourse goes beyond the system and actually reaches into the world. He asks, 'if language were not fundamentally referential, would or could it be meaningful?' <sup>43</sup>

Ricoeur's contribution may thus be stated simply as follows. In the tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey the text was approached subjectively. This led to various hermeneutical difficulties. As a reaction to this Saussure has emphasised the objectivity of the text as it stands and its structural inter-relations, without reference to the original authors intention, or the meaning for the reader. In this manner the pendulum moved from the pole of subjectivity to the pole of objectivity. Again problems were created, this time because the very possibility of hermeneutics was jeopardised. Ricoeur has swung the pendulum back to a balanced position. By not entirely rejecting Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole* he has maintained the significant contribution of structuralism towards the autonomy and objectivity of the text. By elevating the significance of discourse over *langue* he has reopened the hermeneutical possibility.

Our own use of structuralism follows the general position of Ricoeur. We will use the *langue/parole* distinction, but not rely on the signified/signifier distinction. We suggest that while a naive acceptance of all structuralist conceptions would be dangerous to biblical studies, a use of some of the structuralist techniques can be very valuable.

An added complication is that structuralism is sometimes viewed as a method and sometimes as an ideology. For those who do not share in the philosophical tradition of Dilthey and Heidegger or in the anthropological concepts of Lévi-Strauss, the ideological side of structuralism is problematic. <sup>44</sup> Thiselton raises the whole question of the ideological versus the methodological aspects of structuralism and believes that the method can be used constructively without necessary commitment to the ideology. McKnight notes Umberto Eco's criticism of Lévi-Strauss. In seeking 'deep structures', and in identifying these with reality rather than the surface text, Lévi-Strauss operates in fact with Heidegger's philosophy of Being. <sup>45</sup> Our own use of structuralism remains strictly on the methodological level. We do not advocate the ontological philosophy, or the Jungian psychology, or the particular anthropological understanding often associated with structuralism.

The particular contribution of structuralism in this thesis is in the attention which it con-

centrates on the text as a structural system which has autonomy in its own right, regardless of the origins of the text or the modern interpreters use of the text. It is admittedly impossible to escape from the subjectivity of the modern analyst or structuralist and in this sense the autonomy of the text can never be absolute. However, if any method is more likely to transcend the subject and give autonomy to the text then it is to be welcomed, especially when it comes to the interpretation of the N.T. In addition, the structural models which are used for analysing texts are often particularly useful in the exegesis of the N.T. Such structural methods or models will be made use of in our exegetical study of the infancy narratives.

A few final points will be made by way of clarification. Structuralism, in its insistence on synchronism over diachrony is usually understood to be anti-historical in some sense. However one may point out that most recent exponents of structuralism in biblical studies are careful to note that the two emphases should each be given their place in a total approach to the N.T.<sup>45</sup> Our use of structuralism certainly does not dispense with diachronic or historical-critical issues. In fact a larger amount of space is given to the historical question than to the hermeneutical question, although this is largely due to the fact that the historical question takes longer to settle. However, both diachronic and synchronic issues are given equal place. Our understanding of N.T. interpretation is that once the historical issues have been settled the task of exegesis is not complete. It is in going beyond the traditional historical-critical issues that structuralism is particularly helpful to N.T. interpretation.

Most structuralists operate on the level of the sentence, and it is often emphasised that the proposition is the basic linguistic unit of significance.<sup>47</sup> This is undoubtedly true, but the danger which Ricoeur saw in connection with Saussure's emphasis on the synchronic structure may arise if there is no movement beyond the sentence. While one remains on the level of the sentence one is forced to remain in the area of the inter-relation of the signs within the system. Propositions in isolation from the narrative seldom contain enough content to be meaningful in themselves as part of the communication of the text. However, as one moves onto the level of the pericope, and most significantly, of the narrative as a whole, one automatically moves in the direction of the actual message of communication in the narrative whole. It is essentially the narrative that reaches out from the structure of discourse and begins to communicate something to the world. While we do not therefore reject an emphasis on the proposition, and while in many cases that is where one ought to begin, we have felt it necessary to emphasise a narrative analysis, or what some have termed '*narratology*'. The analysis of the pericope, or '*textems*', is, in addition, more applicable to the infancy narratives than the analysis of the propositions within the narrative. This is because of the particular nature of these narratives which will become plain in the ensuing exegesis.

Two disciplines which have much in common, on the surface, are literary criticism and structural analysis. However, little has been written on the relationship between them and the boundary between the two disciplines is not easy to draw. Vern Poythress has pointed out that Robert Culley's work on the O.T. miracle stories is not very different from form-criticism.<sup>48</sup> Gerard Meagher's analysis of the *'Prophetic Call Narrative'*, is a literary approach to the O.T., yet it is very similar to Benjamin J. Hubbard's structuralist analysis of commissioning stories in Luke-Acts and in the O.T.<sup>49</sup> Dan O. Via discusses the relationship between the two disciplines and notes that they are not uncomplementary.<sup>50</sup> Were the relationship between literary-criticism and structural analysis to be carefully defined it would probably indicate that the approach adopted in this thesis would fall just within the boundary of structuralism and nearer to literary-criticism than many structuralist treatments of the biblical text. There is little in our exegesis of the infancy narratives which could not be said without the use of structuralist techniques. However, a measure of clarity can be attained with structuralist techniques which the more traditional approaches cannot produce.<sup>51</sup>

### Structural Analysis

Before we embark on the structural analysis and bring these principles into operation, we shall state the fundamental thesis which emerges from the analysis of the text.

We suggest that the infancy narratives, in their own theological message, can be understood in terms of, firstly eschatology, secondly Christology, and thirdly prophetic exhortation. These narratives are fundamentally eschatological, Christological and prophetic. This chapter will examine each of these three areas in turn. The three terms need to be defined. In recent years, the tendency is to regard Luke as a non-eschatological writer. He is thought to have *'historicised'* the earlier eschatological emphasis of the tradition. In reply to this, two points need to be made. Firstly, it is not clear that this is the correct understanding of Lucan theology. While some of the urgency of the eschatological tension may be absent from his writings (and even this is not certain), this does not mean that the eschatological understanding of history has been altogether removed.<sup>52</sup> Secondly, the word *'eschatology'* is not being used here in the narrowest sense. We do not refer to the imminent expectation of the eschaton. Rather we refer to the whole fabric of the N.T. documents as witnesses to the fact that the Messianic age has dawned. The eschaton has been proleptically realised in the present through the ministry and message of Jesus, in this case, through the birth of Jesus. The age of promise and expectation has been replaced by the age of fulfilment and grace. The word eschatology is therefore used with the connotation of Messianic fulfilment. It is believed that the fundamental message of the infancy narratives is the concept of eschatological fulfilment.

The term '*Christology*', as used here, is defined by the remarks that have just been made. The term is not being used in the sense of Trinitarian or Chalcedonian formulas. Rather, the Christology which is being discussed is a primitive Messianic Christology. We are in essential agreement with Wolfhart Pannenberg when he says that the eschatological event of the resurrection is the ground of Christ's unity with God, and with John Montgomery when he says that the resurrection is the place of vindication for the claims of Christ. In this sense Christology is grounded upon eschatology. It can only be understood on the basis of eschatological fulfilment. The term '*Christology*' is used in this specific sense in this discussion. The eschatological understanding of Christology may lead to certain implications which affect the Trinitarian and doctrinal formulations of the orthodox tradition. In the case of the resurrection this is certainly the case. However, such implications are not the basic concern. Christology must be understood eschatologically before it can be understood ontologically.

What is meant by the prophetic nature of these narratives will be explained once we arrive at that point. Here it is enough to say that the infancy narratives are not kerygmatic material, neither catechetical, nor didactic. They are best understood as being '*prophetic*' narratives.

We begin our structural analysis with a syntagmatic examination of the basic content of the infancy narratives, namely with the annunciation motif. In Matthew's narrative we have the annunciations to Joseph, to Herod and to the Magi. We use the word '*annunciation*' as a broad description for the way in which news of the eschatological event came to the principal (semic)figures. In the Lucan narrative we have annunciations to Zechariah, Mary, the Shepherds, Simeon and Anna. Again the term annunciation is used as a broad term to describe either the angelic pronouncement or the circumstantial way in which the news of the eschatological event was communicated to the principal figures.<sup>53</sup>



## Matthew

## 1. The Annunciation to Joseph

- i. 1: 18-19 Introduction. The situation beforehand. The negative connotation of divorce and shame.
- ii. 1: 19-23 The annunciation-revelatory event.
- iii. 1: 24-25 His reaction. Obedience.
- iv. 2: 13-15, 19-23 Result. Continued divine guidance connoting divine approval, climaxing in the shelter of Nazareth, the '*protectress*'.

## 2. The Annunciation to Herod

- i. 2: 1 Introduction. '*Herod the King*', indicates negative state of affairs associated with the old age. The Messianic king is not on the throne.
- ii. 2:2 Revelatory news = annunciation event.
- iii. 2: 3-8, 13: 16-18 His reaction. Trouble, cunning, rage and murder, connoting negative response.
- iv. 2: 19-20 Result. Death, mentioned immediately after the death his reaction brought on others. Connotes divine retribution.

## 3. The Annunciation to the Magi

- i. 2: 1 Introduction. '*Wise men from the East*.' Distance from the land of promise. Hence connoting geographical separation from the Messianic era, i.e. indicating the old age.
- ii. 2: 2a '*We have seen his star*'. = annunciation - revelatory event (a).
- iii. 2: 2b '*We have come to worship him*'. = Their reaction (a).
- iv. 2: 3-6 Christ to be born in Bethlehem, revealed by the scriptures = annunciation - revelatory event (b).
- v. 2: 9 Star moving = revelatory event (c).
- vi. 2: 10 Their reaction (b), joy, connotes positive response.
- vii. 2: 11a '*Saw the child*' = revelatory event (d).
- viii. 2: 11b-c Their reaction (c), worship and gifts, connoting positive response.
- ix. 2: 12 Result. Further divine protection and guidance, connoting divine approval.

## Luke

## 4. The Annunciation to Zechariah.

- i. 1: 5-7 Introduction. The state of affairs associated with the old age, i.e. the priestly functions, righteousness under the law, and the barrenness of life.
- ii. 1: 8-11 Annunciation-revelatory event (a).
- iii. 1: 12 His reaction (a), trouble and fear, connoting negative response.
- iv. 1: 13-17 Annunciation-revelatory event (b).
- v. 1: 18 His reaction (b), scepticism and unbelief, connoting negative response.
- vi. 1: 19-23 Result. Struck dumb, connoting divine retribution.

## 5. The Annunciation to Mary.

- i. 1: 26-27 Introduction. The situation beforehand. Mention of a virgin and a man indicate no special dignity for those in the house of David, i.e. connotes old age.
- ii. 1: 28 Annunciation-revelatory event (a).
- iii. 1: 29 Her reaction (a). Trouble and wonder. No clear connotation.
- iv. 1: 30-33 Revelatory event (b).
- v. 1: 34 Her reaction (b), enquiry, no clear connotation.
- vi. 1: 35-37 Revelatory event (c).
- vii. 1: 38,45 Her reaction (c). Complete submission and faith, connoting positive response.
- viii. 1: 39-56 Result. General narrative clearly indicates divine approval.

## 6. The Annunciation to the Shepherds

- i. 2: 1-7 Introduction. Roman rule, Davidic family in submission to that rule, connoting old age.
- ii. 2: 8-9a Annunciation-revelatory event (a).
- iii. 2: 9b '*Filled with fear*'. Their reaction (a), no negative connotation.
- iv. 2: 10-14 Revelatory event (b).
- v. 2: 15-17 Their reaction (b), belief, excitement, movement, confess-

ion, connoting positive response.

vi. 2: 20

Result. Praise and joy, indicating divine approval.

## 7. The Annunciation to Simeon

- i. 2: 22-25a-c Introduction. Sacrifice, hoping for redemption, connoting old age.
- ii. 2: 25d-27 Revelatory event.
- iii. 2: 28-32 His reaction, relief and blessing, connoting positive response.
- iv. 2: 29a '*Depart in peace*'. Result. Implied peaceful death, connoting divine approval.

## 8. The Annunciation to Anna.

- i. 2: 36-37 Introduction. Old Age, temple worship, connoting the old age.
- ii. 2: 38a '*That very hour*', i.e. by divine providence = revelatory event.
- iii. 2: 38b-c '*Gave thanks to God, spoke of him*' = Her reaction, positive response.
- iv. Result not given.

The section Luke 1: 39-45, 57-58 is usually taken as a structural bridge between the annunciation to Mary and the birth of John. However, once the pattern has become evident from the other cases it becomes apparent here as well. Thus:

## 9. The Annunciation to Elizabeth

- i. 1: 39-40 to which 1: 5-7 is the background. Hence the state of affairs associated with the old age.
- ii. 1: 31a,b. '*Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary*', the Messianic child entered her presence, though yet unborn = Revelatory event.  
'*The babe leapt in her womb*' = further revelatory event.
- iii. 1: 41c-45 Her reaction. Excitement, confession, blessing. Positive response.
- iv. 1: 57-59 Result. '*The Lord had shown great mercy to her*'. i.e. divine approval.

This analysis shows that the various annunciation narratives may have anything from four to

nine elements or *'functions'* in the narrative sequence. However, the difference in the number of elements can easily be simplified. In every case the sequence begins with an introductory statement which almost always connotes the state of affairs in the old age, i.e. the age prior to the eschatological event. In every case, except the eighth, the sequence ends with a result which either indicates divine approval or retribution. In every case the introductory statement is followed immediately by the annunciation or revelatory event. This initial revelatory event is then always followed immediately by an existential response, which is either positive or negative. The difference in the number of elements in the sequence is simply due to the fact that the annunciation-response dynamic sometimes occurs in only two elements and other times in a recurring pattern of annunciation and response. The annunciation events (a,b,c,d, etc) can be grouped together into one element and the response events (a,b, c,d, etc) can similarly be grouped together into one element. The recurring pattern in some narratives simply accentuates the tension created by the annunciation-response dynamic. The result is that every narrative sequence has four elements:-

- i. Introduction. The Old Age.
- ii. Annunciation-revelatory event.
- iii. Response, positive or negative.
- iv. Result, positive or negative.

The clarity with which the introduction presents the state of affairs in the old age is not the same in every case. In some cases, the *'old age'* connotation is unquestionable (Matt. 2: 1-2 in sequence 2; Luke 1: 5-6 in sequence 4; Luke 2: 1-7 in sequence 6; and Luke 2: 22-25 in sequence 7). In other cases it is less obvious (Matt. 1:18-19 in sequence 1; Luke 1: 26-27 in sequence 5.) The general pattern is clear enough, and if the specific element (i) is not always clear, then indications from the narrative in general are clear enough (this point will be explored in detail below).

The pattern we have discovered from the syntagmatic analysis can now be used to construct a syntagmatic-paradigmatic grid.

| Syntagmatic  | Old Age                                     | Annunciation                           | Response  | Result   |
|--------------|---|--|---|--|
| 1) Joseph    | 1: 18-19<br>Divorce and shame               | 1: 19-23<br>Christological             | 1:24-25<br>Obedience                                    | 2:13-15,19-23<br>Divine guidance.<br>Divine approval |
| 2) Herod     | 2:1<br>Herod the 'king'                     | 2:2<br>Christological                  | 2:3-8,13,16-18<br>Trouble, rage, murder                 | 2:19-20<br>Divine retribution                        |
| 3) Magi      | 2:1<br>Distance                             | 2:2a,9,11a<br>Christological           | 2:2b,10,11<br>Movement, joy, protection, worship, gifts | 2:12<br>Divine protection                            |
| 4) Zechariah | 1:5-7<br>Righteousness under the law        | 1:8-11,13-17<br>Implied Christology    | 1:12-18<br>Fear, scepticism, unbelief                   | 1:19-23<br>Dumbness, Divine retribution              |
| 5) Mary      | 1:26-27<br>No dignity for Davidic line      | 1:28,30-33;<br>35-37<br>Christological | 1:29,34,38,45<br>Submission, faith                      | 1:39-56<br>Divine approval                           |
| 6) Shepherds | 2:1-7<br>Roman rule even for Davidic line   | 2:8-9a,10-14<br>Christological         | 2:9b,15-17<br>Excitement, movement, confession          | 2:20<br>Praise, joy, divine approval                 |
| 7) Simeon    | 2:22-25<br>Sacrifice, period of hope        | 2:25-27<br>Christological              | 2:28-32<br>Relief and blessing                          | 2:29a<br>Implied peaceful death.<br>Divine approval  |
| 8) Anna      | 2:36-37<br>Old age, temple worship          | 2:38a<br>Christological                | 2:38b,c<br>Thanks, confession                           | No result stated.<br>Implied approval                |
| 9) Elizabeth | 1:39-40,<br>1:5-7<br>Priesthood, barrenness | 1:41a-45<br>Christological             | 1:41c-45<br>Excitement, confession, blessing            | 1:57-58<br>Mercy shown.<br>Divine approval           |
|              | Paradigm A                                  | Paradigm B                             | Paradigm C  | Paradigm D   |

Eschatology

Christology

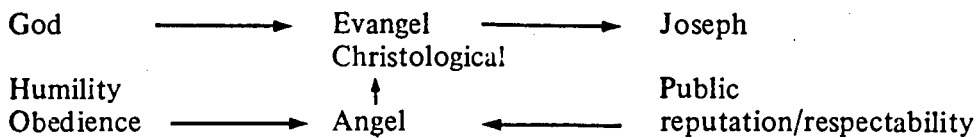
Prophetic exhortation

The paradigmatic relationship between the various elements becomes obvious from the grid. This paradigmatic-syntagmatic structure reveals the fundamental 'deep' structure of the infancy narratives. The relationship between paradigms A and B reveals that eschatological fulfilment is the first deep structure. The old age is transformed into the new by the Messianic annunciation or revelation. The new age is consistently expressed in terms of Christology. This is the second deep structure. In the one exceptional case (4/B) the content of the annunciation has clear Messianic implications; '*he will go before him*' (Luke 1:17). The relationship between paradigms C and D reveals the third deep structure. The response-result dynamic operates for the reader as an encouragement to faith and a warning against unbelief. This is the element of '*prophetic exhortation*' which will be further explained when we describe the structure in detail.

### The Actantial Model.

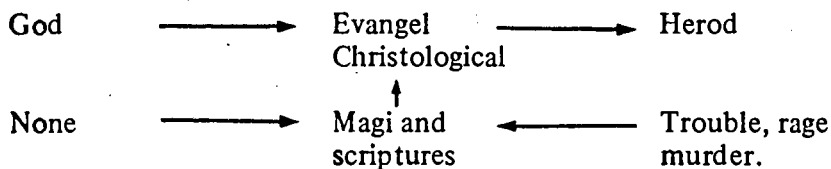
Corroborative evidence to support this analysis of the text is provided by the use of the actantial model. The nine narrative sequences can be analysed as follows:

#### 1. The Annunciation to Joseph



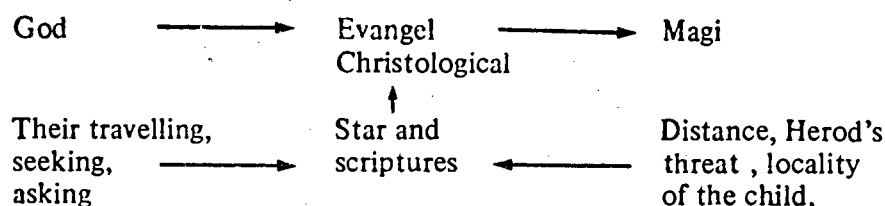
The existential decision is highlighted in this model. The result is not shown, but the struggle between the fear of public respectability being lost and the step of obedience is evident along the axis of power. The crisis element in response is therefore accentuated in this model.

#### 2. The Annunciation to Herod



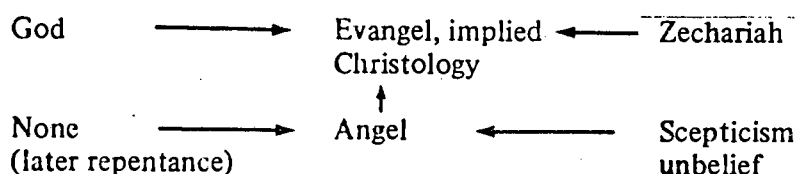
Here the axis of power reveals the total absence of struggle in decision. There is absolutely nothing to offset the negative reaction of Herod.

### 3. The Annunciation to the Magi



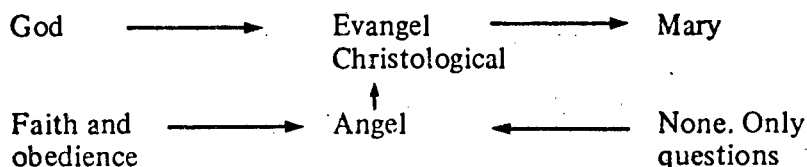
The axis of power reveals the dynamic of response. The obstacles presented by the great distance, Herod's intention, and the difficulty in finding the locality of the child, are offset by their willingness to travel, seek and ask, even if it required risk to themselves. The crisis element is accentuated.

### 4. The Annunciation to Zechariah



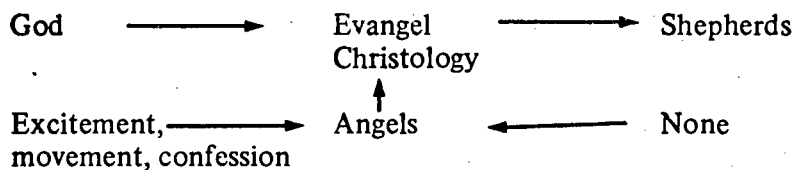
The crisis of decision shown on the axis of power is not as complete in its negative connotations as in the case of Herod. Over against his unbelief is the eventual submission to God's will in naming his child John (Luke 1:63-64).

### 5. The Annunciation to Mary

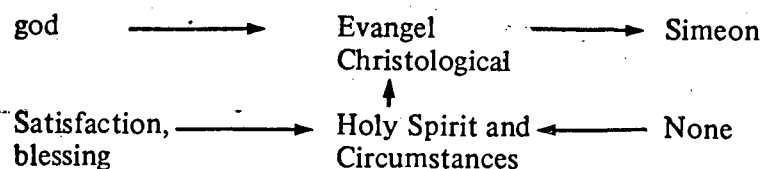


Mary's questions are not in the same category as those of Zechariah. They indicate no unbelief. Her total submission to the will of God therefore stands in contrast to Zechariah's belated repentance. There is nothing on the axis of power to counter her submission to the will of God. However, while her questions do not connote unbelief, they do indicate perplexity and wonder at first (Luke 1:29,34). The axis of power reveals again the crisis of decision for Mary, but without the negative force of unbelief.

## 6. The Annunciation to the Shepherds

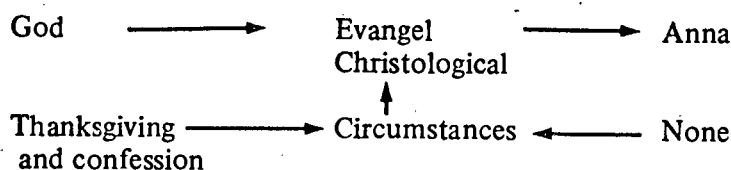


## 7. The Annunciation to Simeon



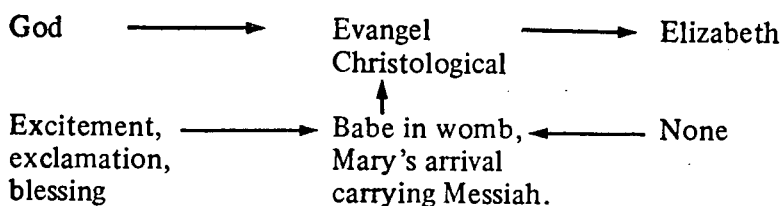
The axis of power has nothing to offset Simeon's sense of satisfaction and faith.

## 8. The Annunciation to Anna



The axis of power indicates no resistance to her joyful acceptance and faith.

## 9. The Annunciation to Elizabeth



There is nothing to offset her spontaneous rejoicing.

The actantial model is helpful in the following ways:



Firstly, the message is always the same. Its content is Christological or by implication, Christological. Whether the birth of the Messiah is proclaimed by angels or whether the actual presence of the Christ child is involved, his coming always constitutes the actual message.

Secondly, the receiver has semic significance. The individuals do not stand in the text as mere individuals. Their character manifestations contain wider meaning effects. These will be discussed at a later stage.

Thirdly, the subject actant reveals an interesting relationship. The subject is usually the angel (or angels). In the case of Simeon, it is the Holy Spirit and circumstances. He was at the right place at the right time. Simeon was led by the Spirit. With Anna only the circumstances are mentioned. She came up at that particular hour. The implication is that she was led by the Spirit. This actantial relationship therefore indicates that the evangel can come to men in various ways. There may be a direct announcement (as in the proclamation of the church to the world). There may be the inner workings of the Spirit through which God speaks to men. He may even speak to them through nature (the star) or the scriptures (the scribes). He may even speak to them (as in the case of Herod) through those who are themselves poorly informed about the content of the message (the Magi). But in each case it is God who is the sender, and men are brought into the crisis of decision. There is perhaps only one qualification to this statement. The message sent merely through nature did require further explanation through the medium of the scriptures (i.e. special revelation). The general pattern is, however, clear. The particular source of the message is not crucial and may not be used as an excuse. Once men have heard, then they are responsible to act.

Fourthly, the actantial model brings the crisis of decision into sharper focus than the syntagmatic-paradigmatic model. In each case, the individual receiver is brought into the crisis of existential decision. The actantial model accentuates the positive and negative aspects of his response. Fifthly the two models corroborate each other. The paradigmatic structures correspond with the actants in the actantial model, revealing the same deep structures in both models.

The structural analysis now leads us to a detailed exegesis of the text. The 'deep' structures which we have discovered must now be tested by an examination of each pericope. It will be noted that the following exegesis will use the key elements supplied by the paradigmatic-syntagmatic grid A-C. Each pericope will be exegeted from the perspective supplied by the dynamics of the actantial model. In this manner the 'decomposition', and 'recomposition' of the text through structural analysis provides the key to biblical exegesis. The detailed examination will demonstrate the fruitfulness of this method.

## EXEGESIS

## THE ESCHATOLOGICAL NATURE OF THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

## Matthew

If there is one word that demands attention in the Matthean infancy narratives, it is πληρω. It has long been recognised that the infancy narrative is arranged around five 'fulfilments'. This structure reveals the basic intention of the author, and in order to understand the narrative at all, we have to begin with the basic intention of the author. This has been pointed out by Krister Stendahl. In these chapters, Matthew operates with a *'carefully organised structure'* and with *'a clarity of purpose, which should allow us to find out what he thinks he is doing with this material'*<sup>54</sup> We must begin with the question *'what did Matthew intend to say?'* rather than *'what does this narrative tell us about the virgin birth?'* or any other concern of ours.

## Matt. 1: 1-17 The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

Matthew's fundamental message is one of fulfilment. This must be more carefully defined. The heading to the prologue evidences Matthew's equally central concern. This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, *'the Son of David'*. The end of the genealogy makes this even more explicit, *'...from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ (του χριστου) fourteen generations.'* The fulfilment is not simply the fulfilment of a particular O.T. prophetic word in a particular situation (2 Kings 10:17). This is the fulfilment of the Christ and therefore the fulfilment of all of Israel's hopes. This is fulfilment which is eschatological. The stark reality proclaimed by the first verse cannot be over-emphasised. For a nation that had waited for over three centuries to hear again the prophetic word, and for a people that had been without an anointed King since the exile, to begin any writing with the claim to be writing the genealogy, or history, of the Son of David, was bold and outrageous. True, many Messianic pretenders had risen and as quickly had come to ruin. But Matthew has come to the stage where the Messiah's history can now be written. These are events which he looks back upon, and looking back as he does, he begins his writing with this statement of absolute finality. The impression of eschatological fulfilment is therefore very strong.<sup>55</sup>

This impression is reinforced by a closer examination of the structure of the genealogy. The linguistic structure of the genealogy has been carefully analysed by P.P.A. Kotze.<sup>56</sup> An ordinary genealogy would read:

*'A was the father of B,  
and B was the father of C,  
and C was the father of D' etc.*

This genealogy has a number of special additions to this typical format, i.e.. in the first section it reads:

*'Abraham was the father of Isaac,  
and Isaac the father of Jacob,  
and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers' (Matt. 1:2).*

'And his brothers' is a special addition. In the previous chapter we noted the work of C.T. Davis on this additional or redactional material.<sup>57</sup> Here we shall follow his exposition rather more closely. He finds the following elements in the events that are expressed in each editorial addition;

*in every case a great threat to the fulfilment of God's promise has appeared. At each break the reader is confronted with a well known Israelite, a pious foreigner, and with a significant act of God which leads Israel beyond a threat to the promise and finally to the age of the Messiah.*<sup>58</sup>

1. *'Judah and his brothers.'* This royal family was to rule the nation. Thus both the King and the nation, represented by the twelve tribes, are stressed from the beginning. The history of salvation is the history of the relationship between the King and the people. Judah is considered to be the honoured brother in Rabbinic interpretation. In his portion belongs the temple mount, the temple treasures and the temple courts. However, the sense of honour and nationhood are submerged under a memory which cannot elude those who know the story of *'Judah and his brothers'* for it was *'Judah'*, leading *'his brothers'* who sold Joseph into the hand of foreign traders. (Gen. 37:25-28). We are therefore given the hint of the whole threat to the people of God in the Egyptian episode not only of Joseph but of the entire nation. Yet that episode is a striking example of how God acted to save both Joseph and his brothers and through them the nation and the promise.
2. *'Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar.'* The birth of Perez and Zerah by

Tamar introduces us to a very shady episode in the life of Judah. The royal line of the Messiah depended upon obedience to the Abrahamic covenant, which included the solidarity of the nation as children of Abraham, pure from gentile blood. Here Judah himself shows an open and uncontrolled desire for Canaanite women. Such activity threatens the promise. Consequently, his two sons from this union are slain by the Lord (Gen. 38:7 and 10). Judah does not heed the warning and goes off to find yet another Canaanite wife. He is unsuccessful and so turns aside to a harlot who draws his attention. In his desire he is prepared to part with his signet, his chord and his staff, the emblems of his sovereignty (Gen. 38:18). The royal line seems to be utterly lost. Then at the last moment he discovers that the so-called harlot was his own daughter-in-law, motivated by her desire for fulfilment of the Levirate pledge. His emblems of government are returned. Judah has to repent. He confesses that *'she is more righteous than I'* (Gen 38:26). Even in this tale of depravity, the sovereignty of God is at work, ensuring the perpetuation of the royal line. Gentile blood enters into Messiah's lineage and, comparatively speaking, the blood of one who is more righteous than Judah.

3. *'Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab'*. The incident of Rahab again sets in sharp contrast the failure of the nation and the threat to its existence with the relative *'righteousness'* of an *'unrighteous'* gentile. On the threshold of conquest, the armies of Israel are put to flight by an insignificant city. The nation has to undergo the painful process of Achan being revealed as the cause of God's wrath (Josh.7). In the midst of this situation, Rahab perceives that *'the Lord has given you the land'*, (Josh. 2:9) and she places her faith in the promise of God. This is vindicated when Jericho is defeated and the conquest proceeds to its fulfilment.
4. *'Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth'*. The O.T. scripture itself links Ruth with Tamar (Ruth 4:12). The generally backward state of the nation is again evident from the famine upon the land and that fact that an Israelite must seek for his livelihood in a foreign land. This land becomes the land of death and disaster. Contrasted with this is the faithfulness and loyalty of Ruth, who declares, *'your people shall be my people, and your God my God'* (Ruth 1: 16). Once again, gentile blood enters into the royal line, and once again the gentile stands out as the one of faith.
5. *'David the King, and the wife of Uriah'*. The addition of the fact that David was *'the King'* gives clear indication of the real thrust at this whole Messianic theme. But again David *'the King'* is nevertheless David the sinner who only stands by God's grace. The episode with Bathsheba is possibly Israel's darkest blemish, because it blemishes

Israel's greatest moment. Here it becomes evident that Matthew's purpose is not so much the sexual deviation theme or the foreign woman theme, but the theme of God using the gentile rather than the Jew, and thus showing that the redemption of His people is His act alone. Notably, Bathsheba is not mentioned specifically - Uriah's name is mentioned, and it is Uriah's loyalty and faithfulness that contrasts with David's perversity. It is he who has zeal for *'the ark and Israel'* and *'the servants of my Lord'* who are fighting for the nation (2 Sam.11:11). The theme is rather one of grace than one of women or sexual deviation.

6. *'Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon, Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel'.*

*'Judah and his brothers marked the beginning of the fulfilment of promise; Jeconiah and his brothers mark its cancellation.'*<sup>59</sup> In the person of Jechoniah, the royal line comes under the curse of God.

*As I live, says the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off and give you into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. (Jer.22.24 - 25)*

*Thus saith the Lord, "write this man down childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days; for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David, and ruling again in Judah". (Jer.22.30)*

This judgement is *'because they forsook the covenant of the Lord their God'* (Jer. 22 9).

Here it seems the royal line has reached its end. The Davidic monarchy has *'died'* in the Babylonian exile. Yet this same man is granted an heir (1 Chron. 3:17). Rabbinic commentators explained that Jechoniah must have come to repentance in Babylon. God therefore miraculously granted him a son, even during his imprisonment. In his repentance he led Israel on the path of repentance. Thus on return from exile the royal line is again *'resurrected'*. Once again the nation and the promise were threatened; once again the situation is one of Israel's utter failure, and once again the hand of God reached out in grace and restoration.

7. *'Jesus born of Mary, betrothed to Joseph.'* The strangeness of God's ways in showing

how his righteousness can be manifested in the midst of seeming irregularity occurs in the fact that Mary is with child before her marriage to Joseph. As in the former cases, the one who seems most unrighteous (Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba-Uriah) is revealed to be the most righteous, and most clearly the one of faith. Mary's seeming unrighteousness is shown to be a situation of real faith. The gentiles who contrast with the Jew are evident in the Magi. When Israel itself cannot recognise the birth of its Messiah, the Gentiles have to teach them, and the threat to the royal line is indicated both by Herod's failure to acknowledge the Messiah and his attempt to kill him. The acts of God in the history of redemption now come to their fulfilment in the coming of the Messiah, who is indeed the Act of God.

What becomes clear from Davis' exposition is that this genealogy recapitulates the entire course of Israel's history, and traces the fortunes of the Davidic family through the vicissitudes of that rather chequered history. The entire course of this history is viewed in order to introduce the present age of fulfilment. Israel's history is no longer an end in itself. Its movement is no longer regarded as being orientated towards the future. Now from the end of Israel's history, the writer looks back towards the past. The entire history of Israel is therefore seen merely as the pre-history of this present age of Messianic fulfilment. The structure of three fourteens shows how the Davidic monarchy was first established, then lost, and then regained. The accent is on the fact that it is now regained. We must point out that such a survey of Israelite history, including, as it does, the very real threat which remained for so long over the hope of any fulfilment, without evidencing any sense of continued threat, can only be written from the understanding that the fulfilment is now beyond question. It is now irrevocable. The eschaton has finally arrived. The kingdom of God and the reign of his Messiah have been established.

W.D. Davies reaches essentially the same conclusion;

*it is well to note that probably the mere insertion of a genealogy, stretching from Abraham to Jesus, in Matt. 1:1-17, had itself a theological significance, not in connecting the birth of Jesus with the act of creation necessarily, but at least in suggesting that one era was over and a new one begun... the genealogy, as such, is an impressive witness to Matthew's conviction that the birth of Jesus was no unpremeditated accident but occurred in the fulness of time and in the providence of God, who overruled the generations to this end, to inaugurate in Jesus a new order, the time of Fulfilment. 60*

## Matt. 1: 18-15 The Annunciation to Joseph

The next pericope is structured around another fulfilment testimonia (1:22-23). Again the specific nature of this fulfilment is stated forcefully in the first sentence. *'Now the birth of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ took place in this way'* (1.18). The fulfilment is Messianic, therefore it is eschatological. Clearest of all is the way in which the redactor deliberately translates the word 'Emmanuel'. Even given the necessity of making this word understandable to Greeks, the deliberate translation at this particular point (the fulfilment testimonia) indicates that the author's consideration was not only linguistic. For Jewish readers as much as Hellenists, he is virtually saying *'His name is Emmanuel, and do you realise what that means'*. The quotation of Isaiah recalls the particular emphasis of the Isaianic eschatological prophecies. The *'Emmanuel'* of the first chapters eventually broadens out to the final intervention of the transcendent God declared repeatedly in the latter half of the book (40:12-17; 21-31; 44:24-25; 46:1-13; 48: 6-13).<sup>61</sup> The Jewish expectation of the Messianic age was that the God of Israel would bring in his ultimate reign. If anything, during the intertestamental period the beliefs concerning this age become increasingly fantastic. On the other hand, the relationship between the Messiah, or even Messiah's, and this divine intervention was never clearly understood. For some, Elijah would precede the Lord himself. For some, he would precede the Messiah. For some, there would be a Messiah of Aaron and a Messiah of David. In all these expectations there was the sense that ultimately the Lord himself would intervene. This was the ultimate eschatological hope. Matthew's specific definition of *'Emmanuel'* dares to recall this ultimate form of eschatological expectation.<sup>62</sup>

We shall draw further attention to the angelic appearances below. At this point it is important to notice that angelic revelations form a major part of Matthew's infancy narrative. One could almost say that hand in hand with the five-fold testimonia one finds a four-fold angelic revelation. These two motifs are in fact inseparable. In this pericope, the angelic revelation immediately precedes the fulfilment formula (1:20-21 → 22-23) and the record of Joseph's obedience to the angelic revelation immediately follows the fulfilment formula (1: 22-23 → 24-25). The two motifs together account for almost the entire pericope. In the pericope 2: 13-15 the two motifs are again inseparable. The record of the angelic revelation (2: 13-14) is immediately followed by the fulfilment testimonia. In both these pericopae the angelic revelation in a sense brings about the fulfilment event or explains the significance of the fulfilment event. In the former case, the angelic declaration is the underlying motivation for the certainty that the event is in fact an eschatological fulfilment. In the latter, the angelic revelation actually causes the circumstances which led to the fulfilment event. The last pericope (2. 19 - 23) has the same two motifs arranged in the same manner. The angelic revelation

(2:19-20) is immediately followed by Joseph's obedience (1:21). This involves the fulfilment event and calls for a fulfilment formula (2:22-23). The pericope 2: 1-12 does not evidence such a strong interrelation of fulfilment and angelic revelation. The fulfilment formula is related to the scribes in Jerusalem (2:5-6) while the revelatory dream (2:12) is connected to the Magi. In this case there is no mention of '*the angel of the Lord*'. The overall pattern, however, is not broken. The circumstances which call for the fulfilment formula are initiated by the Magi, who are also the recipients of the revelatory dream. The interrelation between the two motifs and the mention of the '*angel of the Lord*' are submerged perhaps due to the fact that the Magi were gentiles.

The inter-relation of these two motifs suggests that the secondary one (angelic revelations) is also viewed in an eschatological context. Further investigation supports this supposition. Two points can be made. Firstly, the general occurrence of such phenomena was not a characteristic of the post-exilic period. By way of contrast, every Israelite knew that in the great period of Israel's past, such revelations had been frequent. The sudden abundance of such phenomena, therefore, has eschatological significance. Such phenomena would be expected in the age to come, where the Lord would once again be especially near to his people in guidance and in comfort (Hosea 11:1-4 and 14:7). Secondly, the closing of the revelatory or prophetic period of Israel's history was marked by the experiences of the '*prophet*' Daniel.<sup>63</sup> In Daniel, the prophetic period was beginning to draw to a close, and at the same time the eschatological future was being revealed, precisely by angelic revelations. Daniel's experiences of the angel are similar in many ways to those narrated by Matthew. At the end of the angelic revelation, he is told to '*seal the book, until the time of the end*' (Dan.12:4). The phenomenon of an angelic revelation is embedded in a thoroughly eschatological context. In fact, to speak of eschatology and angelic revelation together, is to speak of apocalyptic. Much the same can be said of the experience of the prophet Zechariah. Again the '*angel of the Lord*' (Zech.3:1), revelatory experiences in dreams (Zech. 1:8; 4:1) and prophecy concerning the eschaton, are found together. We need not go to any lengths to show that the apocalyptic books grew in popularity during the inter-testamental period. The association of angelic revelations with eschatological events was therefore fixed in the minds of the Jewish people. This was ensured by the whole apocalyptic movement. Here, however, we have what may be termed an inverted apocalyptic-angelic revelation. No longer does the angel reveal the distant future or even the possibility of an immediate future. Now the angel reveals the present as the age of fulfilment. This is an unprecedented element which has profound eschatological import.

#### Matthew 2: 1-12 The Visit of the Magi

The pericope which describes the arrival of the Magi lifts the motif of eschatological fulfil-



ment onto a universal level. We noted in the previous chapter how the expectation of a universal Saviour who would be born somewhere in the West, had become a common expectation in the ancient East. This expectation may or may not have emanated from the Israelite Messianic hope. Yet this common expectation was matched by the Jewish belief that at the time of the end the nations would come to Jerusalem as the centre of the world. This belief is set forth in Isaiah 2:1-4. The same theme is taken up again in Isaiah 60:1-7. Matthew's fondness for Isaiah would lead us to believe that such passages were in his mind, though in the absence of a specific reference one cannot be dogmatic.<sup>64</sup> Be that as it may, the belief that all nations would come to Jerusalem at the time of the eschaton, had become fixed in the Jewish mind. This pericope, with the kings of the East coming to Jerusalem therefore has a strong eschatological flavour. The development of the '*star of Balaam*' theme during the post-exilic period is well attested. We noted in the previous chapter that the absence of a specific reference in Matthew must lead to caution in seeing this entire narrative as an expression of that tradition. Having said that, however, one must equally affirm that the '*star of Balaam*' expectation formed part of the general climate of opinion amongst the Jewish people. If Matthew did not specifically allude to this prophecy, he nevertheless narrated events in such a way that no Jew would be likely to miss a general allusion to such Messianic prophecies. Every Jew would also know that Balaam was a gentile who predicted the Messiah of Israel. The connotation of Messianic fulfilment in this pericope is therefore unmistakable.

This pericope sets the fulfilment theme in a universal context. At the same time, it makes the eschatological fulfilment truly particular and specific. In this way the particular and the universal are held in tension to produce the profound sense that this particular child will have universal significance. We refer to the geographical emphasis of the seven fulfilment formulae in the Matthean prologue (1:1-4,16).<sup>65</sup> The geographical note is not forcibly struck in the first pericope (1:18-25). Here it becomes explicit. Herod enquired *πou ο χριστος γεννᾶται* (2:4). The scribes reply with the name of a particular village '*in Bethlehem of Judea*'.

#### Matthew 2: 13-23 Egypt and Return

The next two fulfilment formulae have a geographical interest, though this interest does not predominate. With the fifth testimonia the geographical note again specifies the place where the child will live (2:23). The geographical emphasis continues with the beginning of John's ministry (3:1-3), and comes to the fore again rather forcibly in the seventh testimonia (4:12-16). The effect of this tension between the universal and the particular is to concre-

tize the eschatological fulfilment and therefore to underline its reality. The Jews expected an eschatological event which would have universal significance. Matthew makes room for this emphasis, but at the same time he emphasises that the fulfilment has taken place in two particular villages (Bethlehem and Nazareth) and in a particular provincial area (in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali). This fulfilment no longer remains in the area of vague generality. *'Here'* and *'there'* are the places where the fulfilment has taken place. It has concrete reality.

The pericope 2:13-15 continues the eschatological element. This time the very fabric of Israel's redemptive consciousness is seen to be fulfilled. At the centre of the Israelite redemptive consciousness was the Exodus, commemorated every year by the Passover. The bondage-deliverance motif was considerably reinforced by the whole experience of exile and return. As a punishment for her apostasy, Israel, once redeemed from Egypt, had to return to Egypt (alias Babylon). The great prophetic period witnessed a number of predictions to the effect that the Lord would once again liberate his people from Egypt and from bondage. The latter part of Isaiah sets this motif of the return from exile in the context of eschatological fulfilment (Isa.48:17-22; 51:9-11). This deliverance from bondage would be final. The Lord would ultimately intervene on behalf of his people. The life which greeted the returned exiles gave no sense of satisfaction to such prophecies. Evidently the new Exodus had not really taken place. With the burden of the Roman yoke this realisation became uncomfortably real. Matthew's *'out of Egypt have I called my son'* must be seen against this context. It amounts to the incredible claim that in the particular history of this one individual the new Exodus has finally taken place. It is not enough to say that Matthew was merely seeking a proof text on which to peg the story of Jesus' stay in Egypt. His proof texts do not operate as mere proof texts. They continually express the motif of eschatological fulfilment. Matthew had this broader context in mind.

The same motif is present in the next formula quotation (2:18). In the previous chapter, an attempt was made to explain the particular logic of the Rabbinical form of interpretation which is involved in this citation.<sup>66</sup> Here it is enough to say that the intention is not simply to find a proof text for the tragic events that took place in Bethlehem. Once again the citation recalls the whole exile-return motif. The next testimonia (2:23) does not have a theological content. Rather its purpose is geographical. As we have seen, the geographical emphasis has its own theological or eschatological significance. In one way or the other then, the fulfilment formulae are the expression of a thoroughly eschatological message. The foundation of Matthew's infancy narrative is fulfilled eschatology.

## Luke

We have already noted that Paul Minear has defined Luke's infancy narrative as expressing the *'theology of the time of fulfilment'*.<sup>67</sup> This theme must now be examined in the context of Luke's general understanding of the *'fulfilment'* motif. One of the most remarkable adaptations of the Markan material in Luke is the incident of Jesus' visit to the Synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30 - Mark 6:1-6). There is so much added material that many scholars have concluded that Luke must have had the benefit of an independent tradition.<sup>68</sup> Be that as it may, this section includes much that is peculiar to Luke. Further, the position of this incident comes at the beginning rather than in the middle of Christ's ministry (as in Mark 6:1-4). Evidently it was important to Luke. The central logion is found in vs. 21. Both *σημερον* and *πεπληρωται* are crucial for an understanding of Lucan theology. To take the latter first, this theme is again mentioned in Luke 22:37, and again the material is specifically Lucan. In this case the Isaianic servant figure is referred to. In Luke 4:18 the Isaianic citation probably also refers to the servant (Isa. 61:1-2). *πληρωθη* is inserted into the Lucan redaction of the last supper (see Mark 14:25; Matt. 26:29). The same is true of Luke 21:22 (Mark 13:14-22; Matt. 24:15-27). Luke 24:44 brings the Gospel to a close with the same theme. In this case the entire O.T. scriptures are seen to be fulfilled in the person of Jesus. The fact that the fulfilment alludes to the servant passages and the fact that the entire O.T. is fulfilled in Jesus, indicates that for Luke the fulfilment had final eschatological significance. It is in this light that the *πεπληροφορημενων* of Luke 1:1 ought to be seen. It indicates that Luke viewed his entire work (Luke-Acts) as a story of fulfilment.

This impression is strengthened by the emphatic use of *'today'*. Noticeably the same idea is connected with the fulfilment citation in Luke 22:37. Just previous to that we have the decisive *Αλλα νυν* (22:36). *'Today'* occurs again in Luke 23:43, and, significantly for our purposes, in Luke 2:11. *'Semeron catches Luke's sense of realised eschatology'*.<sup>69</sup>

The *νυν απολυσιν τον δουλον σου* in Luke 2:29 contains the same decisive connotation. The thought is not so much that the aged Simeon can die in peace. The thought is that now he has seen the eschatological fulfilment of Israel's hopes. The linking of this phrase with *κατα το ρημα σου* makes this clear. We noted in the previous chapter that the *επλησθησαν* in 2:22 could also carry an eschatological significance.<sup>70</sup> If the theme of *'the Lord coming to his temple'* was indeed in Luke's mind at this point, then the reference would be unmistakable. The use of *πληρωθησονται* in 1:20 does not have a special significance since the use of the word is determined by the context. However, in view of the general theme, the use of

τελειωσις in 1:45 might be regarded as having real significance.

Enough has been said for two conclusions to be drawn. Firstly the infancy narrative is seen to be part of Luke's general emphasis on eschatological fulfilment. Secondly, the use of *νυν* and *πληρω* in Luke's gospel cannot be used to divide up his theology into a three-fold periodization (as with Conzelmann). Rather, Luke regards the entire period from the birth of Jesus to the period of the church, as part of the new age of eschatological fulfilment.<sup>71</sup> With this general introduction we can now examine the motifs in the infancy narrative in detail.

In the second chapter mention was made of four scholars who have approached the infancy narrative of Luke with Conzelmann's systemization of Lucan theology in mind. On the one hand, both Oliver and Tatum substantially accepted Conzelmann's view point.<sup>72</sup> Tatum in particular tried to show how Luke's references to the work of the Spirit may be divided into three periods. He concluded that the infancy narrative was to be included in the epoch of Israel. On the other hand, Paul Minear and Howard Marshall both rejected Conzelmann's systemization of Lucan theology. Minear in particular demonstrated that the infancy narrative completely destroys Conzelmann's neat system. We cannot but agree with Minear. His article decisively answers Tatum's argument. Having said this, however, we must go on to say that in a very limited sense Tatum's argument (and by implication Conzelmann's system) can be accepted. There is no clear division between the epoch of Israel and the epoch of Jesus in Luke's Gospel, but what we do find in the infancy narrative is the time of transition. To use Tatum's phrase, *'there is both continuity and discontinuity'*. The infancy narrative stands as the bridge between the epoch of Israel and the epoch of Jesus. It stands on the threshold of the new age. Standing as it does, straddling both worlds, it should teach us that no neat system can be satisfactorily applied. Yet, by doing so, it does teach us that two different worlds do exist, and these two worlds are totally different. To use the metaphor used by the infancy narrative itself, this period is the time of the *'day spring'* the *'dawning'* (*ανατολη*) of the Messianic day. (1:78).<sup>73</sup> The night never changes abruptly into the day. Night merges into the greyness of the dawn and the dawn merges into the brightness of the day. So too, the eschaton comes with some continuity with the old age, and yet it mounts to the radical newness of eschatological fulfilment. Thus Tatum was right in indicating the O.T. elements in this narrative, while Minear was right in emphasising the elements of fulfilment that predominate over the elements of the old age.

The narrative is clearly set within the context of old Israel. References to Abraham (1:55, 73) Moses (2:22), Aaron (1:5), David (1:27,32,69;2:4,11), Elijah (1:17), the fathers (1:72),

the prophets (1:70), the Messianic hope (1:32f; 2:11,25-26,38), the Nazarite vow (1:15), the priestly tradition (1:5,8), scribal interpretation (2:46f) and the monarchy (1:5) are to be found. Israel is spoken of as the people of God (1:16-17,54,68,77; 2:1, 2:32,34).<sup>74</sup> In fact, all the elements which were continually referred to in the previous chapter to indicate the Jewish-Palestinian character of these narratives may be used to show that they are set within the context of old Israel. The abrupt change between the Lucan prologue and the following pericope is unmistakable and there is nothing quite so Jewish or Old Testamental in the remainder of the Lucan writings and indeed in the entire N.T., except perhaps for the letter to the Hebrews.

All these marks are given in such a manner as to indicate that the old age is now truly old. It is difficult not to see an intentional reference to the difference between the two ages in the differences between the ages of the principal figures. Here a distinction needs to be made between a valid biblical inference and the influence of Christian legend. It does seem to be a valid inference that Simeon was an old man, however tenuous that may be.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, there is absolutely no warrant for the common belief that Joseph was already old when he took Mary to be his wife. This seems to have arisen from the belief in Mary's vow of perpetual virginity. We have rejected this idea. Consequently, we must reject the inference that Joseph was too old to enjoy a young wife. In all probability, he was also a young man. There exists therefore a contrast in this narrative. Elizabeth and Zechariah were advanced in years; and beyond the age of fruitfulness (1:7). Does this not express the fact that old Israel is also beyond the age of fruitfulness? Quite possibly Luke had this in mind. Similarly, Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:36) were old. Luke seems to note especially the great age of Anna. One also gains the impression of solitariness. Anna spent her time in the temple (2:37) separated from other people. Simeon is singled out as '*righteous and devout*' (2:25). The impression is given that he was unique in this. We have then two old parents, and two old and solitary people, the last representatives of the old Israel, as though they alone were left (1 Kings 19:10-18). The remnant has dwindled to this meagre handful of old people (the shepherds are definitely the recipients of grace; they stand within the new dispensation). In contrast to these few old people (to which the friends and neighbours of the Judean hill country ought to be added - 1:58,65), the mother of Jesus is a young virgin, and Joseph is a young man, preparing to take his bride.<sup>76</sup> To both old and young the two infants are born. With them the destinies of all those in the new age are included. It is in this context that the pericope, Luke 2:57-66 is to be understood. We concluded in the previous chapter that the central motif of this pericope is the significance of the name John. We also mentioned Rene Laurentin's study on the etymological

allusions to this name in the narrative.<sup>77</sup> It now becomes plain why John cannot inherit his father's name. He is specifically the one to usher in the new age. Hence his name connotes the grace of God. Despite the fact that he brought a message of judgement John himself represents the beginning of the new age (notice the use of *εὐηγγελίζετο* in Luke 3:18). The epoch of Israel is old and ready to pass away (Heb.8:13). The new age of eschatological fulfilment is being ushered in by momentous events. For a few years, narrated by the infancy narrative, the two ages co-exist.<sup>78</sup>

Having set the narrative in context, we can now examine elements of eschatology.

#### Luke 1: 5-25 The Annunciation to Zechariah

We may begin with the first pericope. The first sign of something new and unprecedented is the angelic revelation (1:11f). As with Matthew's narrative, this motif runs through Luke's infancy narrative. The following pericope records a second angelic revelation (1:26f). The second chapter is similarly characterised by a visitation of the angelic hosts (2:9f). In the same category we must place the revelation of Simeon (1:26) and Anna (1:38). The same conclusion which was drawn from Matthew's narrative must follow in this one. These are the characteristics of the new age which are signs of a new work of God on behalf of his people. Coming after the poverty of such phenomena in the inter-testamental period, a poverty made more desperate by the numerous cases of pseudonymous apocalyptic revelations, these phenomena mark the narratives with a thoroughly eschatological character.

Closely allied to these phenomena is the evidence of the prophetic spirit which is to be found in the Lucan infancy narrative. This element is absent from Matthew's narrative. Here it seems that Paul Minear has gone too far in minimising these characteristics in his attempt to answer Tatum's over-emphasis on the '*epoch of Israel*'. There are not just two prophetic utterances. Elizabeth experiences the sudden filling of the Spirit and in that condition blesses the mother of the Messiah (1:41f). The Magnificat is a prophetic utterance. At this point we should recall the conclusion that was reached in the previous chapter to the effect that the entire structure of the annunciation to Mary places her in a prophetic role.<sup>79</sup> Zechariah is filled with the Holy Spirit and gives utterance to the Magnificat. The shepherds return '*glorifying and praising God*' (2:20), an anticipation of the theme of joy and worship which will characterise the early Christian community in Acts. Simeon, who is already described as having the Holy Spirit '*upon him*' or being '*in the Spirit*' (depending on how *εν* is construed), utters a prophetic revelation which was finally fulfilled in the death of Christ (2:25-28f). Anna the prophetess (2:36) enters

the temple. *'She gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Israel'* (2:38) This seems to have prophetic connotations. The *'prophetic spirit'* theme cannot be dissociated from the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit. This has long been recognised as a particularly Lucan theme. Some have even suggested that it is his main theme. This is going too far, but the theme is certainly very important for Luke. The infancy narrative is a particularly clear example of this Lucan interest. John will be filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb (1:15). Jesus will be born of the Holy Spirit (1:35). Simeon enters the temple *'in the Spirit'*. The eschatological nature of this prophetic motif is made abundantly clear by the citation of Joel in Acts 2:15-21.<sup>80</sup> The same experiences are then seen to manifest themselves through the eschatological community of the primitive church in the following chapters of Acts.

Continuing in an examination of the first pericope, we immediately notice the strong eschatological import of the angelic message.<sup>81</sup> The child will *προελευσεται ενωπιον αυτου εν πνευματι και δυναμει Ηλιου* (1.17). The next phrase is a citation of Mal.4.6. Two points arose from our discussion in the previous chapter. Firstly, Luke has not entirely suppressed the idea of Elijah preparing the way for Jahweh himself. He has merely used this to allude to the fact that Jesus shares the name *κυριος* (1:17d). Secondly, as the role of John is portrayed in the infancy narrative, he does prepare the way for the Messiah and not the Lord himself. In this way, Luke has used two different traditions in apocalyptic Judaism and has fused them together so that both are fulfilled in Jesus.<sup>82</sup>

The impression that in Jesus all the hopes of Israel have been fulfilled thus receives more emphasis. We need not therefore debate at length which tradition Luke is reflecting. He is using both. The important point is that the traditions were part of the Jewish eschatological hope. This is Luke's real concern. The element of joy and gladness and rejoicing in vs. 14 has eschatological connotations, as does the last phrase in vs. 17 (see Isa. 40:3f). The pregnant question *'What then shall this child be?'* (1:66) heightens the sense of eschatological expectation. The description of John's ministry in 1:76-77 must be placed in the same context.

#### Luke 1:26-38 The Annunciation to Mary

In the second pericope, the eschatological emphasis is found in the idea of the establishment of the Davidic kingdom, *'He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end'* (1:33). In the previous chapter we cautiously accepted the possibility of an allusion to the eschatological *'Daughter of Zion'* in vs. 28-31 (Zeph.3:14-20). If this is accepted, then two eschatological ideas are to be found in this pericope. To this

must be added Mary's prophetic role, already mentioned, and the phenomenon of angelic revelation. The sense of eschatological fulfilment therefore pervades the entire section.

#### Luke 1:39-56 Mary and Elizabeth

In the pericope 1:39-56 there is firstly a continuation of the '*eschatological Elijah*' theme. We have made frequent mention of the symbolism in Elizabeth's greeting of the mother of Jesus. The Elijah - precursor motif is bound together with the eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit (1:41) to give a powerful effect. The use of *τελεωσις* in vs. 45 is thus in clearer context.

Many commentators have pointed out that the first half of the Magnificat is not especially eschatological. The hymn could have been uttered by any Jewish mother who was conscious of the salvation of God. This is what has led scholars such as Paul Winter to see this as a Maccabean battle hymn. However, we cannot but agree with Brown when he sees the opening of the Magnificat as *'The explication of the kecharitomene of 1:28; it is a commentary on how Mary has "found favour with God" (1:30) and her resulting eschatological joy'*.<sup>83</sup> Douglas Jones has correctly pointed out that with vs. 54-55 we move explicitly into the realm of eschatological fulfilment with the fulfilment of the promise to the patriarchs. This promise was more fundamental to Israel's hope than even the Mosaic or Davidic promises, since all the others ultimately depended upon it. To claim the final fulfilment of this promise was to claim the fulfilment of all that Israel had ever hoped for. Further, as Jones has pointed out, the language here cannot be taken to refer to a momentary and partial fulfilment of such promises. Obviously every time a Jewish believer experienced the grace of God, he could say *'the Lord has remembered his promise to Abraham'*. But the way in which the fulfilment is mentioned in this context points beyond any such partial fulfilment. There is something final about these words. The eschatological fulfilment has dawned.<sup>84</sup>

#### Luke 1:57-80 The Birth of John

In the Benedictus (1:70,72-73) the last two verses make the eschatological reference quite clear. This continues the theme set in the Magnificat (1:54-55). The promise has been remembered (*μνησθηναι ελεους*). This is again referred to in 1:72. In the same general complex of ideas must be placed the *λυτρωσις* of 1:68 and 2:38 and the *παρακλησις* του Ισραηλ of 2:25. This latter phrase recalls the comfort of the Messianic age referred to in Isa. 40 : It had become a fixed term for the Messianic hope in first century Jewish expectation.



The terminology used in this complex of ideas belongs to the old Israel, and sets the narrative in a primitive Palestinian environment, but the terminology is used in such a way that the thought transcends the epoch of Israel. The close clustering of such terminology in 1:54-55 and 1:68-79 adds to this impression.

In the Benedictus the idea of deliverance from enemies is expressed eschatologically. True, the Jewish people had often been set free from their enemies, especially in the Maccabean period. The terminology of 1:71,73 does not go beyond any such Old Testamental experiences. The *πασαις ταις ημεραις ημων* of vs. 75 cannot be accounted for on this basis. This connotes something which is finally established. It recalls the O.T. prophecies of the Messianic age of everlasting peace (Isa.66:25). Then in vs. 77 the use of *σωτηριας* and *αφεσει αμαρτιων αυτων*, though still within the terminology of the O.T., is too similar to the kerygmatic language of Acts to be seen in a purely Old Testamental context.<sup>85</sup>

If there should be any doubt as to the generally eschatological nature of these psalms, the last verse (vs.79) dispels any such doubts. This is a clear allusion to the eschatological prophecy in Isa. 9:2f. Again it may be true that this terminology was the common property of the Qumran community, but when all these ideas are placed together in the manner of the Lucan psalms, the impression of the whole is clearly one of eschatological fulfilment.

#### Luke 2:1-20 The Birth of Christ

The episode of the shepherds, as we have seen in the previous chapter, probably alludes to Messianic beliefs concerning the 'tower of the flock'.<sup>86</sup> When this is joined to the Davidic motif, the eschatological impression is clear. In this context we find the use of *ευαγγελιζομαι* in 2:10. This term has already been used in 1:19. Some scholars have recently denied its positive meaning in the N.T. They base this partly on the use of the word in Rev.14.6, where it is held that the context is one of judgment rather than salvation, and partly on the fact that John's message of judgment is also described by the same term (Lk.3.18). P. Stuhlmacher has concluded that the word carries a neutral sense in 1:19 and 2:10. But this is hardly likely. Firstly, the usage in Revelations cannot be shown to be entirely negative (Rev.10.7 and the context of Rev.14.6 given by Rev.16.9,11). Secondly, John's message is not a negative one. He preached judgment and the imminent coming of the Kingdom. This is good news. Thirdly, the word is used in the Septuagint (especially Isa.40.9;41.27;52.7; 60.6,61.1) and in contemporary Hellenistic Greek with a definite connotation of good news. One can hardly argue from a dubious interpretation of two verses to a forced interpretation of numerous verses.<sup>87</sup> In the infancy narrative, the positive sense is well established by the context. The good news which Zechariah heard was one of 'joy and gladness' (1.14). Here the angel declares *'I bring you good news of great joy which will be to all people'*

(2.10). We can go further and say that in view of the passages from Isaiah that have already been alluded to in this infancy narrative, the word has a decidedly eschatological content. We may notice especially the contexts of Isa.60.6; 61.1; 52.7 and 40.9. The use of Isaiah's ideas is also reflected in the *'glory of the Lord'* (vs 9) which is revealed. As Raymond Brown notes, this gives the connotation of *'a theophany that takes place in the last times'* (Isa.60.1-3, 19-22). The eschatological element is unmistakable.<sup>88</sup> In verse eleven we have the decisive *σημερον* already mentioned above. Then in 2.14 *ειρηνη* carries connotations of the peace of the eschatological kingdom ( see on 1.74 above). The Hebraic use of *ρημα* (reflecting the Hebrew *dbr*) draws attention to the decisive event which has taken place.<sup>89</sup> In this context, together with *σημερον, ευαγγελιζομαι*, the Davidic fulfilment, and the *'tower of the flock'* motif, the *ρημα* has eschatological significance. This usage is emphasised in 2:19. Mary's deep reflection in 2:19 and 2:51 refers to her reaction to the Messianic nature of her Son. Finally, the reaction of the shepherds in 2:20 (referred to above) corresponds to the experience of joy in the early eschatological Christian community. This pericope is therefore thoroughly eschatological.

#### Luke 2:21-39 Simeon and Anna, the presentation of the Child

This pericope may well express the whole idea of the *'Lord coming to his Temple'* in Malachi 3:1 (Luke 2:22f). If this is the case, then the eschatological context is established. It is enhanced by the figure of Simeon, *'in the Spirit', 'looking for the consolation of Israel'* and the decisive *νυν* with which he begins his utterance (2:29). The content of his utterance is similar to the other Lucan psalms. Its terminology does not go beyond the O.T., but the thought is clearly eschatological. Luke 1:31 recalls Isa. 42:6 and 49:6, both of which refer to the Servant of the Lord. The phrase *πρωτη αν ιδη τον χριστον κυριου* (2:26) adds to the weight of the decisive *νυν* in 2:29. Both in this and the preceding pericope, there is a constant refrain on the idea of *'seeing'*. The incident begins with an angel of the Lord appearing (*επεστε*) to them (2:9). The shepherds respond by determining amongst themselves to go over and see (*ιδωμεν* - vs. 15) this thing (*ρημα*). Then, when they saw it (*ιδοντες* vs. 17) they returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen (*ηκουσαν και ειδον* vs.20). Simeon had been told that he would not see death until he had seen (*ιδη*) the Lord's Christ (vs.26). When he had seen the child he responded with *'Lord now (νυν) lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, οτι ειδον οι οφθαλμοι μου το σωτηριον σου (vs. 30)'*. When Anna came into the Temple, she spoke to all

those who were looking for (προσδεχομενοι) the redemption of Israel (vs. 38). The last case is perhaps not part of this special theme. One could pass off this play on the word *ειδον* as a peculiarity of the Lucan style, were it not for the passage in Luke 10:23-24; μακαριοι οι οφθαλμοι οι βλέποντες α βλέπετε. λεγω γαρ υμιν οτι πολλοι προφηται και βασιλεις ηθελησαν ιδεω α υμεις βλέπετε και ουκ ειδαν, και ακουσαι α ακουετε και ουκ ηκουσαν. The context is of the disciples returning victoriously from their first commission as the heralds of the kingdom of God (Luke 10:1f), and of the vision of Jesus regarding the fall of Satan from Heaven (10:19). The disciples are told to rejoice that their names are recorded in heaven, above the fact that the powers of the new age have been evident in their ministry (10:19-20). The eschatological nature of this passage has been disputed by Conzelmann, but on the grounds of his three-fold system and not on the basis of the text itself.<sup>90</sup> Despite this, therefore, there is good reason to see this as a distinctly eschatological passage. This is made quite clear from the use of the same terminology in Luke 7:22 (*ειδετε και ηκουσατε*). Luke 7:22 is Jesus' reply to John's question 'Are you he who is to come?' (Luke 7:19). His reply is in terms of the Isaianic Messianic passages (Isa.29:18-19; 35: 5-7; 60:4-5). The last passage just quoted (Isa.60:4-5) includes the theme of 'seeing' the eschatological signs of salvation. Then in Acts the eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16f) is described in Peter's sermon as ο υμεις βλέπετε και ακουετε (2:33). The theme in Luke 2 must certainly have eschatological connotations as well. It is just possible that Luke has continued this theme into the next pericope in view of the use of *ιδοντες* in vs. 48; but this is doubtful.

#### Luke 2:40-52 The boy Jesus in the Temple

The last pericope does not, in fact, continue with a markedly eschatological note. The emphasis is rather on the temple motif and the identity of Jesus.

Enough has been said to demonstrate the thoroughly eschatological character of the Lucan infancy narrative.<sup>91</sup> The theme of eschatological fulfilment is to be found in almost every section. In this the Lucan infancy narrative is similar to the Matthean narrative. Some of the individual motifs are to be found in both narratives with very much the same emphasis. This substantiates the fact that both infancy narratives ultimately come from the same *Sitz im Leben*, though the tradition has been passed down through different channels and shaped by different redactors. From what has been said it has also become evident that eschatological fulfilment is the basic theological substratum of the infancy narratives. If this is not recognised then the narratives are not able to speak for themselves. What they have to say is simply this, that the new age has begun to dawn upon the people of God. The full outpouring of the powers of the age to come has not yet occurred. But already there is the sound of

the rushing of rain (1 Kings 18:14). Already there is the beginning of the new dispensation. The context is still of the old Israel but the confines of O.T. belief are already unable to contain the thrust of the eschatological kingdom. From this examination it has become evident that these narratives are greatly impoverished if they are simply approached from a dogmatic interest. If the question that is put to them is in terms of the virgin birth (however valid that doctrine may be), then the answer will always be drawn from the narratives unwillingly. The narratives themselves will be fragmented into various sources and interpolations and the resultant exegesis will not take account of the real theological contribution which these narratives are seeking to make.<sup>92</sup> Worse, the dogmatic interest will be frustrated, because the Christological content of these narratives can only be understood in terms of the eschatological framework. On the contrary, if the eschatological framework is understood, then the Christological content can be fully appreciated. This leads to the next section.

### THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CENTRE OF THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

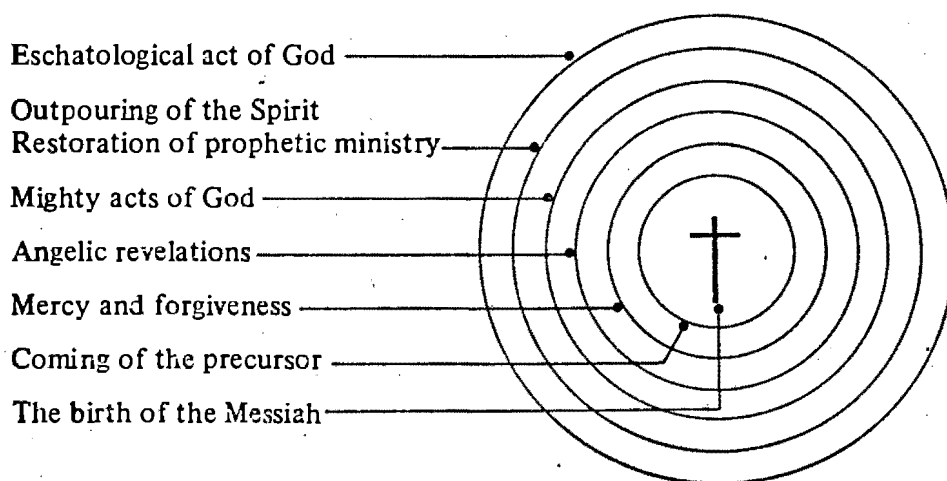
Few would doubt that the person of Christ is the centre of both infancy narratives, in the sense that both are structured around his birth. At the outset, however, it must be stated that the person of Christ is not understood as an abstract ontological reality. He is central, but only as the apex and epicentre of the eschatological event. One could almost say that eschatology is primary and Christology is secondary, but that would be to construct an antithesis which does not exist in the narratives. What is clear is that Christ's person is understood first eschatologically. Then proceeding from that are the connotations of soteriology, sonship etc. The basic eschatological message of these narratives is embodied in the person of Christ; but the eschaton is itself the intervention of God. The relationship between Jesus and God is grounded in the fact that God has acted in fulfilling his promises to Abraham. The end of the age has invaded this age. The expression and embodiment of that event is the person of Jesus, therefore Jesus is so intimately connected with the activity of God that it becomes possible to speak of Jesus as God.

We may illustrate this point by noting the relationship between John and Jesus in the Lucan infancy narrative. Commentators are fond of drawing out the differences between John and Jesus. If the two births are set in a parallel structure then it is said that the parallel structure is there to emphasise the difference between them. To an extent this is acceptable.<sup>93</sup> Then others, following this logic, begin to wonder how the births of John and Jesus could ever have been compared. Would a Christian redactor ever have set the two in parallel? Surely not! Therefore the joining of the two must have preceded the Christian redactor. But if the person who joined the two traditions together was not a Christian then why even transmit

the tradition? Perhaps the tradition was initially transmitted by a Baptist sect: That would account for the motivation of handling the tradition; but why would a Baptist redactor add the account of Christ's birth? The only answer is to conclude that the tradition was first and foremost the story of John's birth, and that a Christian editor has borrowed and transformed the Baptist tradition in order to create a story about Jesus' birth. This accounts for the parallelism between the two. Naturally the copy must reflect the original. This parallelism left the Christian redactor with the problem of John and Jesus being compared. In order to overcome this, the Christian redactor has added an incident to the Baptist story to show the superiority of Jesus and he has inserted contrasts into the narrative - hence our present Lucan account. Such, in brief, is the kind of logic that has often been followed, and at each point a vast amount of critical exegesis has been employed to buttress the theory.

However, the starting point of the entire argument is a false understanding of the Christology that is presented in this narrative. The most basic theological consciousness that is to be found (as we have shown in the previous section) is the knowledge of the eschatological event. God has remembered his promise to Abraham. The eschaton has dawned. The age to come is upon the people of God, and God himself has begun to intervene in human affairs for the sake of his people. The eschatological event is a whole complex of connected events. It may be spoken of as the outpouring of the Spirit. It may be regarded as the restoration of the prophetic ministry. It may be understood as the restoration of God's mighty acts. This may include angelic revelations, miracles and momentous events. This may include the drawing near of God to his people in guidance and in mercy, forgiveness and liberation from enemies. It may include the coming of Elijah, and with him the coming of the Davidic king. All these are parts and aspects of one eschatological event: the coming of the reign of God.

The following diagram helps to illustrate what we mean:



To single out the last two elements mentioned, namely, Elijah and the Davidic Messiah, and to ask '*which one is primary?*' or '*how are they compared?*' is to miss the point completely. And to select one aspect of the Davidic Messiah who is himself one aspect of the great eschatological event, and say that this, the virgin birth, is the centre of these narratives is to miss the point even further.<sup>94</sup>

In Luke's narrative the first pericope is about John's birth. This does not mean that the narrative has not yet got under way. On the contrary, we plunge almost immediately into momentous events. Gabriel speaks to an old priest. The priest is struck dumb. He hears a word about Elijah, about the child being filled with the Spirit, in short, he hears about the eschaton. The second pericope is not a change of subject, neither is it the beginning of another tradition. Once again Gabriel speaks to an Israelite, this time a young girl. Once again a miracle is spoken of. A miraculous birth will occur. She hears a word about God's everlasting Kingdom given to David. The Kingdom is to be restored. This is no change of subject. This is the same subject. John and Jesus are both part of the new age. They cannot therefore be set in antithesis, and to impose such an imaginary antithesis upon the narrative is to misunderstand it.

Does this mean that we are suggesting that Jesus Christ is but one element among many. This would be to go too far; rather we are to understand that in his person, in the birth of this particular child, the eschaton is revealed with greatest clarity. It becomes clear that this particular child is the one recurring theme in the manifold actions of God, so that in fact the whole movement of events is seen to revolve around him and to point to him. This becomes so evident that it becomes possible to identify the actions of God with this child, and therefore the eschaton itself with this child. Consequently this child is identified with God. The last identification protrudes into the narrative at various points and here we cannot but see the insight of the post-Easter realisation being used to interpret the events afresh, and seeing in them what was always there but was not always perceived at the time. Mary buries these things in her heart. She cannot really understand what she sees and hears; but the redactor is writing from the vantage point of having received the tradition from a Mary who finally had understood.<sup>95</sup> The story is retold with all the primitive awareness of the one supreme eschatological event, or complex of events, but now the single-thread that ran throughout the actions of God is truly perceived. The identity of God's eschatological action and this one individual has been understood. Consequently the narrator tells the story in order to bring this particular aspect to the fore. He does not, in doing so, lose the primitive eschatological consciousness. If he had, or they had, the present narratives would not manifest such a thoroughly eschatological character.

Thus, two things need to be held in balance, on the one hand the priority of the eschatological act of God, and on the other hand the centrality of Christ as the unique expression of that divine deed. In this manner, Christology is grounded upon eschatology, or we could say, eschatology merges into Christology. Only in this way can we speak of the Christological centre of the infancy narratives.

### Matthew

Having established the basic theological approach to the subject, we must now affirm something which is so obvious that it need hardly be mentioned. Jesus Christ is the central figure in both infancy narratives.

One can affirm this with particular clarity in the case of Matthew's infancy narrative when it is placed in the context of the whole Gospel. J.D. Kingsbury has demonstrated without question that Matthew's Gospel, *'focusing as it does on the person, ministry and death and resurrection of Jesus Messiah, is thoroughly Christological in tenor.'*<sup>96</sup> He comes to this conclusion after a thorough examination of the structure of Matthew's Gospel. The Gospel is structured firstly around the three major headings (1.1; 4.17; and 16.21), secondly around the five ending formulae (7.28; 11.1; 13.53; 19.1 and 26.1), and thirdly around two sets of three-fold summary passages (4.23-25; 9.35; 11.1b and 16.21; 17.22-23; 20.17-19).<sup>97</sup> What is most significant about Kingsbury's analysis is the way in which he indicates how the name *'Jesus'* predominates in all these crucial passages. It is therefore not surprising that various scholars have affirmed that Christology is central for the infancy narrative. K. Stendahl has indicated the Christological centre of the infancy narrative with his two-fold analysis *'Quis et Unde?'*<sup>98</sup> Raymond Brown has correctly added a *'How?'* to this *'Who and Where?'*. We would suggest that this should be taken further. The *'Who?'* must be placed against the context of the *'When?'* of eschatological fulfilment, and the *'So that!'* of existential response. Christology is central for Matthew only in that particular conceptual framework. Matthew begins *'the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ'*. The entire genealogy is constructed to culminate in the last part of the sentence *'of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ'*. The next pericope begins with a repetition of his name. Matthew could have written *'Now his birth took place in this way'*. Instead, we have the repetition *'Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way'*.<sup>99</sup> The import of the angelic declaration is to assure Joseph immediately that *'what is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit'*. The mention of the name *'Jesus'* and the prophecy of Emmanuel merely enhances the centrality of the child.

In the next pericope (2:1-12), the centre around which all else revolves - the star, the Magi,

Herod's perplexities and all Jerusalem with him, the scribal deliberations, the testimonia, the search, the movement of the star, the discovery, the worship, the gifts, the rejoicing - is the child itself; he who is born *'King of the Jews'*. The same is true of the following pericope (2:13-14). Here it is noticeable that Joseph is told to take the *'child and his mother'* rather than the mother and her child. The reason for the journey is the protection of the child. The testimonia concerns the movement of the child; who is *'my son'*. The following pericope (2:16-18) it is true, does not contain a Christological motif, but then the section is very brief and moves the narrative on to the next pericope. (2:19-23). Here again the Christological centre is evident. Again it is the *'child and his mother'*. There is now safety because those who *'sought the child's life are dead'*. Joseph rose and took *'the child and his mother'*. The dwelling in Nazareth is significant to the writer primarily because it signifies something about his home. The refrain of *'the child and his mother'* is quite evident. The roles of Joseph and Mary are minimal. Joseph is given a more significant role than Mary, but only the role of a servant to his own child; who must simply obey the commands of God for the destiny of this child. The Christological centre of the entire narrative is therefore plain.

#### *King, Son of David and Messiah*

With what type of Christological understanding is the child presented? First and foremost he is presented as the Messianic, Davidic King.<sup>100</sup> We can safely assume that this was Matthew's prime concern in the entire Gospel. This becomes plain from the manner of his redaction of Mark. The title *'Son of David'* occurs eight times in this Gospel (1:1; 1:20; 9:27; 12:23; 20:23; 20:30,31; 21:9). Of these only one is taken from Mark. The usage in 1:1; 1:20; 9:27; 12:23; and 21:9 is peculiar to Matthew. With regard to 9:27, it is significant that Matthew gives two different accounts of Jesus healing two blind men (9:27-31 and 20:29-34). In both accounts the use of *'have mercy on us, Son of David'* is prominent. In the case of 12:23, the leading question *'This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?'* is inserted, with a considerable amount of other material, into the Markan account (Mark 3:20f). A comparison between Matthew 21:9-10 and Mark 11:9-10; = Luke 19:30-40 is instructive. Mark has the crowds exclaim, *'Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that is coming, Hosanna in the Highest'*. The reference is to the Davidic kingdom which is yet to come. Luke excludes all reference to the Davidic monarchy. Matthew includes a specific reference to the Son of David: *'Hosanna to the Son of David'*. Thus while in Mark the hosannas are directed partly at the kingdom which is to come (though of course the reference to Jesus is implied), in Matthew they are directed to Jesus himself as the Davidic



king. Added to the Davidic theme, Matthew includes three references to the 'King' which are his own. The first is in 2:1. The second is a citation from Zac. 9:9 which is peculiar to Matthew (Matt. 21:5); *'behold your king is coming to you'*. The fact that this immediately precedes the particularly Matthean redaction in 21:9 adds to its significance as an evidence of Matthew's primary concern. The saying about the *'King who will sit on his glorious throne'* (Matt. 25:31) is also peculiar to Matthew. The reference to the *'King of the Jews'* in Matt. 27:37 has synoptic parallels, and serves to continue his theme.

There is uncertainty amongst scholars as to whether the title *'Messiah'* was adopted by Jesus himself. Against this is the fact that the use of Messiah as a proper name only began with the Hellenistic period of the early church. Further, there is debate concerning Christ's reply to the high priest. Cullmann and Reginald H. Fuller reject the use of the title by Christ himself.<sup>101</sup> On the other hand, due to the fact that the Gospels never show the disciples addressing Jesus as Messiah, and due to the fact that the use of the proper name does not intrude into the Gospel tradition, as may have been expected, George Ladd concludes that the tradition is historically sound. He concludes that Jesus made no overt claim to the title, but did not reject it when others applied it to him. He rejects the understanding of *'You have said so'* (Matt. 26:64) advocated by Cullmann.<sup>102</sup> We see no reason to reject Ladd's conclusion. Be that as it may, in the Matthean redaction, Messiahship was strongly affirmed for Jesus. Further, the use of *'Jesus Christ'* as a proper name which arose in the Hellenistic community is used in the infancy narrative. This reflects the theology of the redactor and does not affect our conclusions as to the origin of the Matthean infancy tradition in the previous chapter.

The Davidic Messianic theme is the most prominent Christological motif in this infancy narrative. This is Matthew's predominant Christology. We have shown how the genealogy traces the history of the Davidic monarchy through the entire history of Israel. The threat and the protection of the royal line is a recurring theme indicated by the Matthean additions to the genealogy. The structure of three fourteens most probably follows from the numerical value of the name David in Hebrew.<sup>103</sup> The emphasis of the name David is evident in vs. 17; *'from Abraham to David, and from David to the deportation...Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations'*. The greeting of the angel to Joseph is one of the eight references to the title *'Son of David'*. Joseph is greeted in his capacity as the Davidic heir. The whole position of Joseph in the narrative is one of a servant. His own legal heirship is merely there to ensure the legal Davidic heirship of Jesus and his conduct is merely to protect the Davidic child.

The concept of kingship comes out strongly in the next pericope (2:1-12). One cannot miss the dramatic play on the word in the first two verses;

*in the days of Herod the king, behold wise  
men from the East came to Jerusalem saying  
"Where is he who has been born King of the  
Jews"? 104*

Then in the following verse Herod is again described as specifically *'Herod the king'*. This is then immediately followed by the scribal deliberations and the citation of a Davidic passage (2:5-6). The great alarm of Herod and all Jerusalem heightens the sense of drama. A mere child has been born of insignificant parents. Herod has the capital city under his command (vs 4), yet he feels this great sense of threat. This is in sharp contrast to the theme of the genealogy where the Davidic line was itself under threat. What was once threatened now causes threat. This is then followed by a reciprocal threat in Herod's destructive investigations and actions. Threat is therefore set in tension with threat, and the issue around which this drama revolves is the Davidic kingship. The idea of threat and protection is continued in the account of the journey to Egypt and the return. It is in this context that the reference to Nazareth finds its meaning. From the beginning of the genealogy through to the reference to Nazareth, one can trace the same theme. The genealogy follows the theme throughout. Then a further threat falls over the Davidic line when Joseph is tempted to divorce Mary. The angel intervenes. With Herod's reaction there is the threat and counter threat. Again the angel intervenes (vs. 12) and the Magi are warned. Herod seeks to kill all the children in Bethlehem. The threat mounts again. Again the angel intervenes (vs 13) and Joseph takes the child to Egypt, the place of protection. He returns, only to find yet another threat in the person of Archelaus (vs 22). Consequently Joseph takes the child to the final place of protection, Nazareth, the village called *'protectress'*, and so the Messianic King came to be called *'Jesus of Nazareth'*. In the previous chapter we concluded that this was the best approach to the citation in vs 23. This study now tends to confirm this. The young shoot, or branch, of the Davidic Messiah was threatened with destruction; but he was taken to a village called *'protectress'*. The theme of threat and protection is thus found right to the end of the infancy narrative.

The net result of such a theme is to show the greatness and the wonder of God's Anointed One. Just as the whole history of Israel saw that kingship continually under threat, and yet continually guarded and protected by the intervention of God, so the childhood of Jesus reproduces the same theme, including both threat and divine intervention. The implication is that this time, above all, the Sovereign will of God will succeed and the everlasting kingdom of David will be established. The history of Israel is seen to be repeated in the history of Jesus. Just as the Davidic line had to endure a demise (in Jechoniah's former experience) and a redemption (in Jechoniah's latter experience) so the *'Son of David'* had to endure a flight to Egypt (parallel to Babylonian captivity) and a return to Israel, and just as

in the former experience of the Davidic line the destiny of the whole nation was tied to the experience of Jechoniah, a son of David, so in the case of the greater Son of David the destiny of the new Israel is tied to his destiny. Thus Hosea's prophecy could be applied, *'out of Egypt have I called my Son'*.

This statement raises the question of the title *'Son of God'* in the infancy narrative. We cannot agree with Kingsbury when he makes this title more important for Matthew than *'Son of David'*, and it is certainly not central to the Christology of the infancy narrative.<sup>105</sup> However, it does seem that Matthew had the title *'Son of God'* on his mind when he used this citation. *'Son of God'* is important in the remainder of Matthew's Gospel, as Kingsbury has shown. Jesus is conceived by the Spirit (1:18,20), not by Joseph (1:18,20,24), hence he is *'God with us'* (1:22-23). In 1:16b, the passive voice of the verb *εγεννηθη* may be a circumlocution for the divine activity, and in 1:20 the passive participle *γεννηθεν* may refer to the same idea. Then in chapter two we have the repeated use of *'the child and his mother'*. Joseph is not mentioned as the father. The Magi *'saw the child with Mary his mother'* (2:11) and they worshipped him. This is then shortly followed by the citation *'Out of Egypt have I called my son'* (2:15). It is very likely that these various hints are to be associated with the citation. In addition, Matthew is strongly influenced by the O.T. where *'Messiah'* and *'Son of God'* are closely associated (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7-8; 89:26-27; 1 Chron. 17:12-13; 22:10).<sup>106</sup> The theological affirmation of this citation is that the destiny and redemption of the people of God is grounded in the Davidic Kingship and Sonship of Jesus.

### *Saviour and Emmanuel*

Two more Christological statements are made by this narrative; Jesus is Saviour and Jesus is Emmanuel (1:21.23).<sup>107</sup>

In earlier N.T. scholarship, it was often presumed that the term *σωτηρ* was taken over from the Hellenistic mystery religion. Thus Bultmann could say *'The general sense of the mysteries may be defined as the imparting of "Salvation" (σωτηρια), hence the deities are called "Saviour" (σωτηρ).'*<sup>108</sup> Today we can no longer be at all certain of this. There is doubt as to whether *σωτηρ* was used during the N.T. period by the mysteries, and the evidence shows that the term was not all that common in the later mystery cults.<sup>109</sup> If any influence can be found from external factors, it is from the Imperial cultus, where *σωτηρ* was more commonly used. This leads Cullmann to the conclusion that the use of *σωτηρ* in the N.T. is derived firstly from the O.T. and secondly from a Christian response to the use of *κυριος* for Jesus. He believes there is *'reason to assume that this Christological designation is an Old Testament title of honour for God transferred to Jesus'*, and that: *'the name "Saviour" (like all the Divine attributes) was ascribed to Jesus in connection with his dig-*

nity as Kyrios'.<sup>110</sup> In the O.T. Othniel and Ehud (Jud. 3:9,15) were called Saviour. However, the title was not in common usage for the Messiah. This is probably because it was usually only ascribed to God Himself. It becomes clear from the fact that it is used for God in the N.T. almost as much as for Jesus (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; Jude vs. 25; Luke 1:47). Significantly, when Jesus is called Saviour the usage is often found in conjunction either with Jesus as *κύριος* (Luke 2:11) or as God (Titus 2:13f). Cullmann concludes

*Primarily we are concerned here with the transfer to Jesus of an Old Testament divine attribute. Jesus is the Soter because he will save his people from their sins. This is how Matt. 1:21 explains the name Jesus. This proper name is one of the Hebrew forms of the title "Saviour" applied to God in the Old Testament.*<sup>111</sup>

These remarks are concerned with the development of the faith understanding of Jesus as Saviour. Related to this is the origin of the name 'Jesus'. There is no evidence that Jesus ever had any other name. He must have received it at birth. Thus, due to the fact that 'to Jewish ears, "Jesus" means the same as σωτηρ "Saviour", we may safely conclude that the name of Jesus contributed to the belief in Jesus as "Saviour".'<sup>112</sup> It made the development of the idea more obvious in a Jewish environment. Whether the angel revealed the significance of the name to Joseph or not depends upon whether we are prepared to believe in divine revelation. The critical data certainly does not refute such a possibility.

The significant point for our present study is that Saviour was actually a term used to describe the redemptive actions of God. In Isaiah this work is related to the eschatological time of God's final saving action (Isa. 43:3,11; 43:15,21; 49:26; 60:16). In answer to the question 'what does Matthew intend by speaking of "Saviour" in this passage?' we may conclude that he is not referring to Jesus as God in an ontological sense. Such theological formulations would have been far from his mind. However, he was thinking of Jesus as the expression of the eschatological action of God himself in saving his people from their sins. Here again, Christology is understood eschatologically. The identity of Jesus as the expression of God's eschatological action tends to the identity of Jesus with God himself. That step has not been consciously taken in this passage, but the eschatological ground of that identification has already been established.

By the term 'Emmanuel' does Matthew intend us to understand that Jesus is God? This, we must admit, is an obvious inference from the text. His name will be 'God with us'. However, we must again emphasise that Matthew may not have consciously worked out the relationship between Jesus and God. Rather, 'Emmanuel' must be understood eschatologically. In the eschatological event, God had come to be with his people in salvation and re-

demption. Jesus is the central point of that divine action. Jesus is the impersonation of the eschatological action of God. Therefore, Jesus can be called 'God with us', and therefore Jesus can be understood as himself 'God with us'.<sup>113</sup> If we view the development of this idea eschatologically, then it does seem that Matthew has identified Jesus with God.

*It is striking how the birth of Jesus is followed by the first quotation from the Old Testament "God with us" (1:23) and the rebirth of Jesus from the dead is followed by His last word "I am with you always" (28:30).<sup>114</sup>*

We conclude that Matthew's infancy narrative has a three-fold Christological teaching. Firstly and pre-eminently, Jesus is understood to be the Messianic king of the lineage of David, secondly he is understood as the Saviour, and thirdly as Emmanuel. All three conceptions are understood eschatologically. Eschatology is the ground of Christology.

## Luke

In the Lucan infancy narrative the theme of Davidic Messiahship is clearly evident. However, it is not as prominent as in Matthew. This conception is given an equal emphasis along with *κύριος*, *υἱός* and *σωτήρ*. The ideas of Christ as *αἴγων* and as the revelation of God are also mentioned.

The Lucan narrative has a greater emphasis on the humanity of Christ. A further feature is the universal framework in which this Christology is set.

## *The Davidic Messiah*

Howard Marshall maintains that as regards Jesus' Messiahship, 'Luke's usage is basically that of his sources, and he does not show any independent development of it.' He goes to some length to show that the idea of kingship was not Luke's primary consideration.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, A.R.C. Leaney and Earle Ellis regard this as a central Lucan theme.<sup>116</sup> Marshall's concern is to show that salvation is the central Lucan concept. This is perhaps correct. However, he seems to have overstated his argument in limiting the importance of Kingship and Messiahship for Luke. Certainly this theme is not as important for Luke as it is for Matthew, but it is one of his characteristic Christological motifs. It is perhaps easiest to demonstrate this in Acts, where we have a clear statement of specifically Lucan theology. It is true that a great deal of the Lucan usage of *Χριστός* is found in Luke's sources, for instance in the various speeches in Acts. However, the fact that Luke has selected certain elements of the tradition reveals his theological interest. What is notable about Luke's use of

*Χριστος* is the use of the definite article. This accentuates the titular connotation of this word (2.31 του Χριστου 3.18 τον Χριστον - similar connotation; 3.20 του κυριου ; 3.26 του Χριστου αυτου ; 8.5 τον Χριστον ; 9.22 ο Χριστος ; 26.23 ο Χριστος ). The last case is evidently a Lucan expression. This becomes clear if one compares Ac. 26.23 - *ει παθητος ο Χριστος ει πρωτος εξ αναστασεως νεκρων* with Lk.24.26.- *εδει παθει τον χριστον και εισελθει εις την δοξαν αυτου*.

The Davidic-Messiah theme also appears in a number of cases where *Χριστος* is not specifically mentioned, but when the idea is clearly present. In 10.38 we hear of how 'God anointed(*εχρυσεν*) Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.' This links the Messianic theme with the work of the Spirit, another characteristic Lucan theme. In Antioch the disciples were first called 'Christians' (11.26). However this name is to be understood, it continues the Messianic theme. In Paul's sermon at Pisidian Antioch, reference is made to the Jewish desire for a king ( 13.21 ). God '*found in David the son of Jesse a man after his own heart,*' and '*of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus as he promised*' (13.22-23) The whole address is structured around the Davidic theme (15. 33,34,36). The restoration of the Davidic monarchy is again mentioned in the speech of James (15.16f), and in 17.17 the Thessalonian Jews accuse the apostles of proclaiming '*another King, Jesus.*' The Davidic theme is strongly evident from Peter's first sermon in Ac.2.25-31, 34-36.<sup>117</sup>

Turning to Luke, and leaving aside for the moment the infancy narrative, the first reference to Messiahship is significant. Again we have the titular *τον Χριστον*, and while Mark has simply '*he did not permit the demons to speak because they knew him,*' Luke has '*because they knew him to be the Christ*' (Mk.1.34; Lk.4.41). Matthew's parallel has no reference to Christ at all ( Matt.8.14-19). Then where Mark has simply '*Let us go on to the next town, that I may preach there also,*' Luke has '*I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also*' (Mk.1.38; Lk.4.43) There is no Matthean parallel. In the case of Lk.8.1, where Luke has '*preaching the kingdom of God,*' Matthew has the less official '*preaching the gospel of the kingdom,*' (Matt.9.35) and Mark has no reference to the kingdom (Mk.6.6b; 7.34). The saying about the kingdom given to Jesus by his father which he will share with his disciples is peculiar to Luke (22.29). The use of '*king*' and '*Messiah*' in the Lucan passion narrative is not significant. Luke 23.2 has no parallel in the synoptics, but then Luke leaves out the reference to the king in 23.11 ( compare Mk.15.16; Matt.27.29) and the two-fold Matthean reference to the king and the Messiah in Matt.27.22 and 27.17. Here Matthew emphasises Christ's Kingship more than Luke. Against this is the fact that Luke uses '*king*' in the parable of the nobleman, while Matthew does not (Lk.19.12; 15.27; Matt.25.14f). Luke 24.27, as we have noted, is also peculiar to Luke. We may safely conclude that Luke does emphasise Jesus' kingship and Davidic Messiahship more than Mark, though less than Matthew.

In the infancy narrative, the angel Gabriel comes to a *'virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.'* (1.27) This prepares us for the particularly Messianic impact of the annunciation;

*the Lord will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end, (1.32-33)*

Zechariah blesses God for having raised up the *'heir of salvation in the house of his servant David.'* (1.6a) Then in the second chapter the birth of Jesus takes place at Bethlehem, *'a city of David'* because Joseph was of *'the house and lineage of David'* (2.4) The annunciation to the shepherds concerns the child who is *'born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord'* (2.11). Simeon had been promised that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ (2.26). The theme is quite evident. As in the speeches in Acts, the theme occurs most frequently in reported speech, this time in angelic declarations. Only three cases (1.27; 2.4; 2.26) out of six are in the prose narrative. This may give some weight to Marshall's conclusion that Luke is merely reflecting his sources. However, there is enough evidence to show that Luke has left his own mark upon such reported speech. The impression remains that this was a positive Lucan Christological emphasis.

#### *Kurios*

This is a prominent Christological title in the infancy narrative. The idea is not limited to specific mention of the name. Jesus' Lordship is hinted at and alluded to in a number of ways. The two most emphatic are Lk.1.43 and 2.11. Elizabeth greets the *'mother of my Lord'* and Jesus is declared to be *'Christ (and) Lord'* by the angels. The latter appellation suggests that Luke is using *κύριος* as the Septuagintal equivalent of Jahweh. The other three references confirm this. Luke deliberately leaves *κύριος* with an ambiguous meaning in 1.17 and 1.76, and the temple scene is suggestive of the prophecy of Malachi (Mal.3.1-Lk.2.22).<sup>118</sup> Thus

*from his birth Jesus is the Lord, and there is no suggestion in Luke that He gained this status at some later point. The disciples came to recognise Him as Lord only at the resurrection, but what they recognised was not a new status but one already possessed by Jesus.*<sup>119</sup>

In the use of *κύριος* the infancy narrative is at one with Luke's theology in general. Jesus as 'Lord' is a specifically Lucan emphasis. While the title is rare in Matthew and in Mark, it is Luke's most common title for Jesus (Lk.7.13,19; 10.1,39,40; 11.39; 12.42; 13.15; 16.8; 17.5,6; 18.6; 19.8; 21.34; 22.61; 24.3,34). This may not prove that Luke has introduced the title himself. He never places this title upon the lips of the disciples when they are addressing Jesus, except when he is using Markan material (19.31,34 - Mk.11.3). However even here when the disciples repeat Jesus' directions, where Mark has *'they told them what Jesus had said'* in Luke the actual words are repeated *'The Lord has need of it.'* Matthew does not use this repetition (Matt.21.1-7). Luke may have depended upon a source where *κύριος* was prominent. He may also have introduced the title himself. In Acts, the use of *κύριος* is related to the glorification of Jesus as the exalted Lord. Here *κύριος* reflects the Septuagintal translation of *'Jahweh'*. This is made explicit by the citation of Ps. 110:34 and Peter's declaration, *'God has made him both Lord and Christ'* (Acts 2:34-36). It indicates that 'Lord' in Acts 2:21 should refer to Jesus as much as to Jahweh. Thereafter the use of *κύριος* in Acts never clarifies whether Jesus or Jahweh is being referred to, or Jesus as Jahweh (Acts 1:21; 5:14; 9:42). The prayer in Acts 4:24-33 is definitely directed to Jahweh as Lord (cf 10:4). Paul's experience however seems to identify Jesus with the Lord (9:5,17,27). Paul the pharisee would only bow to the Lord himself. Peter prays to the Lord (10:14; 11:8), and we are not certain who is being referred to. Acts 10:36 is an emphatic identification of Jesus with Jahweh. Acts 11:23 seems to refer to Jesus, as does 12:11. Acts 13:2 is ambiguous. Acts 14:3 definitely refers to Jesus, while 14:23 and 16:15 are again ambiguous. Acts 18:9 refers to Jesus, while 18:25 is ambiguous. So is Acts 21:14. The use of the title *'Lord Jesus'* similarly identifies Jesus as *'the Lord'* (7:59-60; 19:13,17; 21:13; 22:16). The presence of Jesus is also closely connected with the presence of the Spirit (16:6-7; 8:39; 5:9).

In the light of this usage of *κύριος* in Lucan theology, we must conclude that its usage in the infancy narrative affirms the divinity of Christ; *'l'assimilation de Jesus à Yahweh qui est le dernier mot de la Christologie de Luc 1-2.'*<sup>120</sup>

This statement needs some qualification. We pointed out how in the use of Saviour in the Matthean infancy narrative the fact that the term was first used as a description of the eschatological action of God meant that Christ's identification with God was grounded upon eschatology. The same must be affirmed here. The use of *κύριος* for Jesus in Lucan theology is grounded upon the resurrection and ascension of Christ. We have noted how in view of that event the use of *κύριος* in Acts 2:21 must be applied to Jesus as much as to Jahweh. Acts 2 is a thoroughly eschatological passage. The outpouring of the Spirit is in accordance with what Joel prophesied for the last days (Acts 2:17a). But the events which caused the pouring forth of the Spirit, the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus (2:33), are no less



eschatological. The series of events beginning with the resurrection and culminating in the presence of the Spirit in the Christian community, must be regarded as one complex of eschatological events. It was in this context that *κύριος* was applied to Jesus. Once again there is a vital link between eschatology and Christology. This link, it is true, is not evident in the Lucan infancy narrative as it is in the Matthean infancy narrative. It does, however, constitute the basis of the use of *κύριος* in the Lucan infancy narrative. It is possible that the use of *Χριστός κύριος ἐν πόλει Δαβὶδ* in Luke 2:11 retains the eschatological basis of Lucan theology even in the infancy narrative. As we have noted, this passage is eschatological.

### *Son of God*

Luke does not make much use of the title '*Son of God*'. He merely follows his sources in the Gospel. The title is rare in Acts (13:33; 9:20).<sup>121</sup> The theme does receive some emphasis in the infancy narrative (1:32,35; 2:49). We shall not repeat the examination of this designation which was made in the previous chapter.<sup>122</sup> We concluded there that Luke is referring to more than an adoptionistic sonship. Christ's sonship is unique and alludes to his divine sonship.

### *Saviour*

The theme of salvation is certainly prominent in Luke. Marshall's contention that this is the primary Lucan theological motif is possibly correct, though we would hesitate to select one primary theme. His examination of this idea in Lucan theology cannot be added to in this study.<sup>123</sup> He is right in drawing attention to the fact that God is spoken of as Saviour before Jesus is named as Saviour. In fact, there is a gradual transition in the Lucan infancy narrative from the idea of God as the Saviour, by virtue of his eschatological action, to Jesus as the Saviour. The first reference is to God as Saviour (1:47). This is qualified in terms of the raising up of the hungry and the scattering of the proud. The hymn then goes on to mention the promise to Abraham which has now been remembered (1:54-55).

*We may, therefore, state with some confidence that the thought of God as Saviour is related to His eschatological action in exalting the humble and filling the hungry with good things.*<sup>124</sup>

The saving action of God is then stated in terms of the '*house of David*'. But again it is the '*Lord God of Israel*' who is blessed for having done this (1:67). It is the Lord who has '*raised up a horn of salvation in the house of his servant David*' (1:69). There is yet no

mention of the person of Jesus. The idea is then extended to the preparation of the way of the Lord (1:76). Here for the first time the person of Jesus appears, but he is not specifically mentioned. There is just the suggestion or allusion to the fact that the Lord whom John is preceding is Jesus. Then in 2:11 Jesus is called the Saviour. Here the reference is specific. But again *σωτηρ* (Jesus) is placed in relation to *κυριος*. This child will be a Saviour by virtue of the fact that he shares in the dignity of the name *κυριος*. Finally, in 2:28-30 salvation is stated in terms of Jesus specifically. When Simeon sees the child Jesus, he sees the Lord's salvation. Even here it is the Lord's salvation. It is significant that if there is any play on the word 'Jesus' in the Lucan infancy narrative, it does not come out (Luke 1:31). Rather, if Rene Laurentin is correct, the significance of the name is understood from Luke 1:32ff only as a parallel to Luke 2:10ff.<sup>125</sup> Only when the gradual transition of thought from God's eschatological saving action to the person of Jesus has been made (1:47 to 2:11) can we look back and see some significance in the name 'Jesus'.

What we have observed in the Lucan use of *σωτηρ* and *σωτηρια* in the infancy narrative is a good illustration of what we concluded about the description of Jesus as Saviour in the Matthean infancy narrative. *σωτηρ* was a description of God's eschatological action (Isa. 43:3,11; 43:15,21; 49:26; 60:18) and therefore Jesus could be called *σωτηρ* because he was the personification of the eschatological action of God. Once again Christology is grounded upon the eschatological action of God.

#### *A light for Revelation*

This idea only occurs twice in the narrative (1:79; 2:32). What is significant is that in the first instance there is a clear allusion to Isa. 9:2; 42:6-7 49:6. The idea is not specifically related to Jesus. The Benedictus only alludes to him indirectly. The context is the eschatological action of God. Then in the second instance, Simeon looks down at the infant Jesus in his arms and says: '*mine eyes have seen...a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to thy people Israel*' (2:30-32). Again Jesus is the personification of the eschatological action of God. Christology is grounded upon eschatology. It is not viewed abstractly or metaphysically.

#### *Holy*

This term has already been examined in the previous chapter, where we concluded that it was used as a Messianic title and that it conveyed indirectly the Holiness of Christ.<sup>126</sup> Both *υιος* and *αγιον* were seen to be intimately connected with the conception by the Holy Spirit. In this sense we said that an eschatological basis for the idea of the Incarnation had been established.

These Christological conceptions are found in Luke in the framework of both universalism and particularism. Luke deliberately places the birth of Christ in the context of Roman history (2:1-4). The *'Saviour, who is Christ the Lord'* is thus declared to be the universal Saviour. This idea is then confirmed by the prophetic utterance of Simeon (2:31-32). We concluded in the last chapter that the terminology of Simeon's utterance does not transcend the language of Isaiah.<sup>127</sup> Now we must affirm that for Luke these words must have carried a more developed concept of universalism. Side by side with the fact that he will be a light for *'all peoples'*, is the fact that this will be *'for the glory of thy people Israel'* (2:32). Particularism is similarly mentioned in 2:10, where the good news is to *'the people'*, i.e. the people of Israel. In this way the infancy narrative introduces the Lucan and Pauline idea of the Gospel going to the Jews and then to the Greeks (Rom. 1:16, Acts 13:46-49). It is worth noting that Acts 13:47 includes another reference of the *'light for the Gentiles'* (Isa. 49:6). The idea of Christ as the light of revelation is particularly connected with the twin concepts of universalism and particularism.

The Christological conceptions we have mentioned so far all emphasise the aspect of the divine eschatological nature of Christ's person and work. Luke's infancy narrative also has a manifest interest in the humanity of Jesus. This is much more prominent in the Lucan narrative than in the Matthean infancy narrative.

Firstly, Luke progressively describes Jesus as *βρεφος* (2:12) *παιδιον* (2:27) and *παις* (2:43). Secondly, he deliberately mentions the human development of Jesus (2:40, 52).

Finally, the structural analysis is helpful because it indicates that the Christological material is largely located in a single paradigmatic structure. In Matthew's second pericope the major Christological content is found in the annunciation (1:20-23). Christological content is found almost incidentally in other parts of the narrative (1:18). In the third pericope Christological content is found almost exclusively in the annunciation element (2:2; 2:5-6, 11). In Luke's infancy narrative in the first pericope, the only Christological content is by implication in 1:17, which is part of the annunciation. In the second pericope, Christological content is almost exclusively in the annunciation (1:31-33, 35). The introduction points forward to the Christology that is found in the annunciation. Luke 1:43 mentions the child as the *'Lord'*. In the *'shepherds'* pericope Christological content is again found in the introduction (2:5-6); but this does not constitute the centre of the pericope. The central section is found in the annunciation (2:10-12) where the Christological content is explicit. In the pericope to do with Simeon, the Christological content is more or less evenly

distributed. It is found in the introduction (2:22-25), in the revelatory event (2:25-27) and in Simeon's response (2:29-32, 34-35). However, in this case the mention of the Christ child in the introduction has little theological content and the mention of Christ in Simeon's response operates as a further part of the revelatory event. This is because while Simeon is viewed as the receiver at one point (2:26-27, following the actantial model), he is viewed as the subject at another point (2:29-32, 34-35) and Christ's parents are regarded as the receivers. This section does not therefore alter the general pattern. In the case of Anna, the Christological content is part of the revelatory event. Christological content is found elsewhere in the Lucan narrative in the Benedictus (1:76-79) and in the temple scene (2:40, 49). In general therefore, Christology is associated with the annunciation paradigm.

This structural observation is important for the relationship between eschatology, Christology and prophetic exhortation. The structure of the narrative sequences shows that the Christological content usually comes between the eschatological setting (the old age in the introduction) and the language of response. This adds weight to our contention that Christology emerges out of eschatology and prophetic exhortation emerges out of eschatological Christology.

#### THE PROPHETIC NATURE OF THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

We will take as our starting point for this section the suggestive article of Paul Minear on *'The Interpreter and the Birth Narratives,'*<sup>128</sup> where he states that *'the whole of the tradition is prophetic'*.<sup>129</sup> His reasons for this remark are as follows. His purpose is to discover the original Sitz im Leben of these narratives. Firstly we may assume that these narratives were not used for preaching the Gospel to the unconverted. They presume that the hearers already stand within the faith. Secondly, they are not primarily apologetic. True, a defence against Jewish slurs on the character of Mary appears in a secondary sense, but on the whole the stories *'articulate the common joy of believers over God's saving acts'*. Thirdly, they are clearly not catechetical material. Fourthly, neither can the material be viewed as suitable for pastoral counselling. Fifthly, they are not written from a purely antiquarian interest in Christ's historical origins. Sixthly, the material is not meant just for the telling of picturesque stories to children, and it is not meant to be used simply for the annual festival of Advent. *'No, this tradition reflects the mature and realistic understanding of the Christian life, based upon the cumulative, year-round experience of the Christian community'*. The first listeners were well aware of the later course of events, both of John's life and of Jesus. They look back from after the resurrection *'and frankly suggest that many of the implications of earlier events were hidden until after the climactic revelation of the Risen Lord. In this sense the whole of the tradition is prophetic'*. The tradition is prophetic in the

sense that it developed in a community that was continually re-living the events that took place in the infancy narratives. Just as Jesus came to Bethlehem, so he continually comes into the lives of individuals in existential encounters with the Risen Lord. The Spirit continues to humble the proud and exalt those of low degree. The church still lives under its Herods and Herod's successors. *'There are deep affinities between the corporate experience of the congregation and that of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, Simeon and Anna...'* The narratives arose in the *Sitz im Glauben* where the various responses to the divine act of God in the infancy narratives were still occurring in different individuals. In Zechariah we see the reaction of doubt to the kerygma. In Elizabeth and Anna we see the power of patient expectancy. In the reaction of Herod one sees the *'blind efforts to protect ones own autonomy'*. In the reaction of Joseph one senses the *'temptation to be offended by prevailing moral standards'*, and in Mary one beholds the *'pure receptivity to the Holy Spirit'*. The outworking of existential decisions are evident in the narratives. We hear of men glorifying God, of others standing in fear and trembling before him, of those who give thanks for his mercy and rejoice in his presence. *'It is not to be doubted that these very responses were present wherever the stories were told'*. Further, the early community lived in the expectancy of the parousia. Those first responses to his first advent thus become a paradigm for the fitting response to his second advent. Finally, such an atmosphere of existential response to the coming of Christ can only be appreciated in worship. The interpreter, if he wishes to understand these narratives truly, must stand in the same *Sitz im Loben* of the first hearers. *'He recognises that such a repetition is something which he must share as a worshipper before he can describe God's works as an interpreter'*.<sup>130</sup>

We cannot but feel that Minear has touched the real heart of the infancy narratives with these remarks, and that he has understood the real intentions of the evangelists in recording this tradition. His remarks are, however, not substantiated with a critical investigation of the narratives and they are given briefly as suggestions for the correct approach to these narratives. In the remainder of this chapter we shall pursue Minear's suggestion in greater detail. At this point, two comments need to be made. Firstly, Minear indicates that his approach was stimulated by the remarks of Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard is usually credited as being one of the fathers of modern existentialism. This suggests that the existentialistic approach to the N.T. may be particularly fruitful at this stage of our exegesis. At an earlier point we rejected the dialectical approach to historiography and the Kantian division of facts and their meanings.<sup>131</sup> We have also concluded that the infancy narratives cannot be assumed to be without historical content. There are no good grounds for rejecting their substantial historicity. But to deal with the historiographical question is not to exegete these narratives fully. A true exegesis will seek to understand the intentions of the original authors and the particular message which they were seeking to proclaim. We suggest that

the narratives were written with, firstly, an eschatological message, secondly with a Christological message, and that as an implication of these two elements they were written, thirdly, to produce an existential response. They can only be fully appreciated if they are exegeted existentially.

Secondly, Minear uses the idea of the *'prophetic'* in a particular sense. By *'prophetic'* we shall not refer to the element of *'foretelling'* which is to be found in the O.T. and apocalyptic literature. Neither shall we refer simply to the element of *'forthtelling'*, if by that term the declaration of the will of God for a particular historical situation is to be understood. We refer especially to the *'prophetic'* as that element of *'recalling'* and exhortation which played a considerable part in the ministry of the early Christian prophets. This form of ministry is addressed to those who have already responded to the kerygma but it seeks to re-call them to their first commitment to the exalted Lord and to exhort them to *'remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose'* (Acts 11:23).

Thirdly, it is important that we should grasp the intimate connection between the first two elements and the third. We have noted a number of times that the Christology of the infancy narratives is grounded upon eschatology. Eschatology is seen to merge into Christology. There is thus an intimate relationship between the first and the second elements. These two elements together amount to a decisive existential challenge. The overwhelming event of the eschaton, personified in the Messiah and located in time by the events which surrounded his birth, call out for a response. They constitute a challenge which demands a response. The first two elements relate to the third as challenge to response. The element of the *'prophetic'* arises out of this existential dynamic.<sup>132</sup> We shall begin our examination with the Lucan infancy narrative.

## Luke

### The Language of Response in Luke's Gospel

Before approaching the infancy narrative itself, it will be helpful to examine the element of existential response in the remainder of the Gospel. This is a subject which, in our view, has not received sufficient attention from redaction critics. It is noteworthy that in his final section on *'Man as the Recipient of Salvation'*, Conzelmann does not mention this element of Lucan theology.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, Marshall examines the subjects of repentance, faith and conversion, and then the responses of joy, praise and prayer: but he does not notice the concept of existential response in Luke's Gospel.<sup>134</sup> This warrants investigation, because it would not be too much to say that this element is a predominant theme in the specifically

Lucan material, that it can be found in the Lucan redaction of Q, and to an extent in the Lucan redaction of Mark.

Luke's record of the preaching of John the baptist includes material which is not found in the other synoptics (Luke 3:10-15). According to Conzelmann, *'Here the eschatological call to repentance is transported into timeless ethical exhortation'*.<sup>135</sup> He bases this remark upon the fact that directions are given for future ethical conduct (vs. 11,13,14b). This interpretation is open to a number of criticisms. Firstly, as Marshall has pointed out, *'it is difficult to see how else repentance could be envisaged when it is a question of turning away from sin and disobedience to God's command'*.<sup>136</sup>

Repentance must have an ethical content. That does not mean that salvation is viewed moralistically. One wonders if perhaps this kind of remark does reveal a rather extreme understanding of the Pauline doctrine of justification which would not have been acceptable to that apostle. Secondly, the instructions for a future ethical conduct before the parousia are said to undermine the idea of imminence. As we have pointed out elsewhere, it is questionable whether Conzelmann has properly understood the idea of eschatological imminence in the N.T. If this is so, then the ground of his criticism is removed. Thirdly and this is more relevant for us at this point, this passage can be shown to contain exactly the opposite emphasis. How can one miss the distinctly eschatological connotations of vs. 15? (notice the use of *προσδοκωντος* and *διαλογιζομενων*). In fact, the characteristic motif in this section is that of the response of the people to the challenge of John's message (notice vs. 10,12,14). The *τι ουν ποιησωμεν* in vs. 10 is to be compared with *μι ποιησωμεν* in Acts 2:37. In the passage in Acts, the response follows from the revelation that *'this which you see and hear'* (Acts 2:33) is that which *'was spoken by the prophet Joel'* (Acts 2:16-17). The eschatological or non-eschatological nature of this section is, however, not our main point. What is significant is the language of response which pervades the narrative.

The account of Christ's visit to the Synagogue of Nazareth contains special Lucan material. The climax of this section is found in the logion in Luke 4:21. One cannot miss the eschatological connotation of the decisive use of *Σημερον* (Note how this undermines Conzelmann's emphasis on Luke 16:16 and 22:36). Immediately following this eschatological declaration there is the usage of the terminology of response. *'They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth'* (vs. 22). To this we should add the strong connotations of *επληθησαν παντες θυμου* in vs. 28. The response is twofold. There is both the positive and the negative reaction to the word. This is similar to the Johannine emphasis on the effect of the light upon those who experience it. Luke 5:4-10 is a special Lucan addition to the Synoptic tradition of the call of the disciples. In this section the climax of the narrative is itself a case of existential response to the deed of Jesus. Peter declares *'Depart*

from me, for I am a sinful man O Lord'. Luke then mentions that Peter and his friends were 'astonished' (θαμβος) because of the event (vs. 8-9). The Lucan redaction of the healing of the paralytic shows the same emphasis. Mark says 'they were all amazed' (Mark 2:12). Matthew has 'they were afraid' (Matt. 9:8). Luke has 'amazement seized them all...' and they were 'filled with awe' (Luke 5:26). The reaction to the event is accentuated. The same emphasis on reaction is found in the Lucan redaction of the healing of the man with a withered hand (Compare Luke 6:11 with Mark 3:6 and Matt. 12:14). The incident of the resuscitation of the young man from Nain (Luke 7:11-17) is special Lucan material. The reaction terminology is prominent, 'Fear seized them all: and they glorified God, saying "A great prophet has arisen among us" and "God has visited his people!"' (vs. 16). The use of ἐπεσκεψατο in vs. 16 can be compared with Luke 1:68,78. Whatever Christology is suggested by this passage, the eschatological content is evident. Marshall comments 'As the eschatological prophet, Jesus is the Messiah'.<sup>137</sup> In the Lucan redaction of the deliverance of the Gadarene demoniac we have the addition of the typical Lucan language of response: φοβω μεγαλω συνειχοντο (8:37b compare Mark 5:15 and Matt. 8:34). In the account of the deliverance of the epileptic boy, Luke adds the sentence 'But while they were all marvelling (ἐξεπλησσοντο) at everything he did...' (p.43b). He also enhances the reaction to the healing 'And all were astonished at the majesty of God' (9:43a compare Mark 9:27-29 — no reaction is mentioned: Matt. 17:18 — no reaction is mentioned). Luke has a special interest in the journey to Jerusalem. This may reflect his dependence upon an independent tradition.<sup>138</sup> He specially mentions the reaction of the people to Jesus: 'the people would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem' (Luke 9:53). The pericope Luke 9:57-62 is probably from Q (see Matt. 8:18-22). Luke adds a third reaction to the call of Jesus which produces an existential decision: 'Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my house"' . He then adds a saying which brings out the existential demand for commitment: ' "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" ' (Luke 9:61-62). Mark and Matthew each include a saying of Jesus about those who are either for or against him (Mark 9:40 and Matt. 12:30). The two sayings are stated in reverse order. Luke includes both of them (Luke 9:50; 11:23). This is in line with his emphasis on existential response. Shortly after the citation of this saying, we have a section of special Lucan material (Luke 11:27-28). This is clearly the language of response. It has a marked similarity to Elizabeth's greeting in Luke 1:42-45. The section Luke 12:49-53 is a tradition from Q (Compare Matt. 1:34-36). Luke intensifies the situation of conflict caused by the coming of Jesus with the addition of 'I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled...' (Luke 9:49). The pericope Luke 13:1-5 is special Lucan material. The climax of the pericope is Jesus' saying in vs. 5: 'I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish'. Luke 13:10-17 is special Lucan material. It includes the differing responses of the people to the deed of Jesus. 'She praised



God' (vs. 13), the ruler of the synagogue was *'indignant'* (vs. 14) and *'all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him'* (vs. 17). The story of the prodigal son is unique to Luke. It is particularly full of the language of decision and response. The young man *'came to himself'* (vs. 17), he determined *'I will arise and go back to my father'*. He said to his father *'I have sinned against heaven and before you'* (vs. 21 compare 5:8). The elder brother was *'angry and refused to go in'* (vs. 28). The feast was held because *'It was fitting to make merry and be glad'* (vs. 32). The account of the healing of the ten lepers is special Lucan material (Luke 17:11-19). The main point of the parable is that one leper returned to give thanks. He turned back *'praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks'* (vs. 15,16). Jesus then asked *'Was no one found to return and give thanks to God except this foreigner?'* (vs.18). The theme of the reception of the Samaritans is, of course, another Lucan concern. The story of Zaccheus is unique to Luke. It again emphasises the reception of the socially out-cast: but again the language of response is prominent. Zaccheus *'received him joyfully'* (vs. 6) and determined to restore what he had defrauded from others.

The fact that the nature of existential response to Jesus was a special concern for Luke is undeniable in the light of the data given above. There are a number of typical characteristics. Luke often refers to people *'marvelling'* and being *'seized with fear'*. The event which causes the reaction is either a specifically eschatological event, or it is one of the words and deeds of Jesus, which themselves have eschatological connotations (Luke 11:20). The reaction is often one of praise to God for his glorious acts. The element of joy is frequently mentioned. The acceptance or the rejection of Jesus is usually the primary consideration. With this background of Lucan theology, we can examine the infancy narrative. It is found to be particularly full of the language of response.<sup>139</sup>

### The Language of Response in the Infancy Narrative

#### Luke 1:5-25; 26-38 The Annunciations to Zechariah and Mary

We may notice firstly that the structure of the *'prophetic call narrative'* accentuates the dynamic of challenge and response. There is the divine confrontation (1:11; 1:28), followed by the reaction (1:12; 1:29), the objection (1:18, 34) and the reassurance (1:19-20; 1:35).<sup>140</sup> As we have indicated, our own structural analysis highlights the same dynamic. The second and third paradigms reveal the dynamic of existential decision in their structural relationship. The actantial model leads to the same conclusion, particularly along the axis of power. The two annunciations which form part of the *'prophetic call narrative'* stress the response of both Zechariah and Mary. Mary immediately submits (1:38), and her submission comes as the climax of the narrative. Zechariah belatedly repents and believes (1:63-64).

Both figures are then shown to rise to prophetic heights in their response to the eschatological event. Mary utters the Magnificat, and Zechariah is filled with the Spirit and prophesies the Benedictus. The Magnificat is consistently full of the language of response. The first three verses accentuate this with the repetitive use of *μου, με, μοι*.

The angelic announcement to Zechariah begins with the response that this event will bring forth: *'you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth'* (vs. 14). The differing responses of Zechariah and Mary are accentuated by the contrasting parallelism of the two annunciations. Zechariah's response is basically one of unbelief. It is negative. He is pre-occupied with his problems (vs. 18). Mary's response is essentially positive. She responds in faith (1:45) and submission (1:38). Her question has a different motivation from that of Zechariah (1:34; 1:18).<sup>141</sup>

#### Luke 1:39-56 Mary and Elizabeth

The third pericope can be described as two prophetic responses to the eschatological event. The babe leaps in the womb. This is a response to the presence of the Messiah. Elizabeth, filled with the Spirit, likewise confesses the Lordship of Jesus (1:43 and Romans 10:9). Luke stresses the drama of her response: *'she exclaimed with a loud cry'* (vs. 42).

#### Luke 1:57-80 The Birth of John

In the fourth pericope the part of the neighbours and kinsfolk is almost exclusively described in the language of response. They *'rejoiced with her'* (vs. 58). They *'all marvelled'* (vs. 63).

*Fear came on all the neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying "What then will the child be?"*  
(vs. 65-66).

It is as an immediate result of Zechariah's response of obedience and repentance (vs. 63) that he is liberated from his condition (vs. 64).

#### Luke 2 : The Shepherds, Simeon, Anna and Christ's parents

These elements continue in the second chapter. The shepherds were *'filled with fear'* when the angel appeared to them (vs. 9). In response to the angelic declaration *'They repeatedly said unto one another "Come then let us go over to Bethlehem"'*.<sup>142</sup> All who heard what they said *'wondered'* (vs. 18). Mary *'kept all these things, pondering them in her heart'*

(vs. 19). The shepherds returned *'glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen'* (vs. 20). Simeon's utterance is essentially a response to the sight of the Christ-child (2:28f). In further response to his utterance, Jesus' father and mother *' marvelled at what was said about him'* (vs. 33). The prophetess, Anna, *'gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem'* (vs. 38). In the temple, the scribes were *'amazed at his understanding'* and his parents were *'astonished'* (vs. 47-48). Again Mary *'kept all these things in her heart'* (vs. 51).

In most cases the response is a reaction to the eschatological event. The signs of the new age and primarily the arrival of the Messiah in person (or his forerunner) constitutes an existential challenge which calls for response. The Lucan emphasis we have found in the remainder of the Gospel is particularly evident in the infancy narrative.

### The Semic Figures in the Lucan Infancy Narrative

Our next task is to discover the intention of the evangelist in recording this dynamic of challenge and response in the infancy narrative. Can Minear's rejection of certain possibilities be substantiated? Firstly, can we not regard this as kerygmatic material? Has not Luke *'kerygmatised'* (rather than *'historicised'*) the tradition of the infancy? Is this not evident from this very notion of challenge and response? To this there are two answers. Firstly, it is extremely unlikely that such stories would have been used in evangelistic proclamation. As one can see from the Matthean infancy narrative, they were open to gross misunderstanding. It is equally unlikely that Luke would have projected a kerygmatic image on to this kind of material. Secondly, the book of Acts records a rather fixed content in the apostolic preaching. There is never any mention of the events of Christ's infancy. Some scholars have even gone so far as to claim a total ignorance of this tradition for the early apostles. We doubt this logic, but it does indicate that these narratives could never have been used or conceived of as kerygmatic material.

Can we not regard the narratives as being used for catechetical instruction? Again there are two difficulties. Firstly, this material gives no guidance about the practical Christian life. There is nothing similar to Christ's teaching on the church, or persecution, or the Sabbath, as we find in the catechetical parts of the Synoptic Gospels. Secondly, on the basis of catechetical instruction there is no explanation for the language of response which is so evident in Luke 1 and 2. The same objections can be given for the suggestion that the narratives were used for pastoral counselling. An apologetic or polemical interest may be defended in the Matthean infancy narrative, but there is no evidence of such an interest in the Lucan narrative. The fact that the early fathers used these narratives against Docetism and Gnosticism

does not mean that the original authors intended them to be apologetic material.<sup>143</sup> As we have seen, Luke does stress the humanity of Christ, but his brief comments can hardly be taken as the predominant theme of the narrative. We have stressed that Luke was interested in recording reliable historical information about Jesus. This interest must be extended to the infancy narrative. Luke was not trying to suggest a symbolical meaning which was devoid of historical content. His interest in history was for the purpose of finding significance in the historical events. The language of response makes it impossible to view these narratives as purely motivated by an historical interest. If the tradition was merely recorded for an annual remembrance of Advent, we would similarly not expect to find these elements of challenge and response. The facts would not be so embedded in interpretation. Minear's remarks can therefore be substantiated.

This material is thoroughly exhortatory. It is assumed that the listener is already a believer. At some stage in his life he has also responded to the challenge of the eschatological event. He has accepted the Messiah for himself. He has *'received him joyfully'* (Luke 19:6). He can recall the sense of tension which that decision involved. There was the temptation to reject the message and the overwhelming power of the eschatological challenge which caused him to accept it. Now the question is, will he *'remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose'* (Acts 11:23) or will he allow himself an *'evil unbelieving heart'* leading him to *'fall away from the living God'* (Heb. 3:12). His perseverance of faith will be ensured if the challenge of his initial response is brought upon him afresh. This can be done if he can see himself in the responses of others, if with their response he can re-live his own. If he is able to see the course of a negative response he will be warned. If he can see the results of a positive response he will be encouraged. This experience is provided by the infancy narrative. This is done in a masterly way. The principal figures now become more than historical individuals who reacted at a particular point in time to a particular challenge. They become the symbol of the response of the people of God. They become representative individuals.<sup>144</sup> The concept of representation can be found with almost every principal figure in the Lucan infancy narrative. This is what we mean by the semic significance of the principal characters in the narrative. The characters have a meaning effect that goes beyond the surface structure. Their purely historical features contain within them a symbolic meaning that becomes significant to readers in different situations and at different times.

## Jesus

We may begin with this concept in the case of Jesus himself. In Luke 2:34-35 we find a

connection between the child as an individual ('Behold this child') and the reactions of the people to the eschatological event ('is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel...that the thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed'). In the history of this single child many will fall (εις πτωσις).

*The coming of the Messiah necessarily involves a crisis, a separation, or judgment (κρίσις). Some welcome the Light; others "love the darkness rather than the light..." (John 3:19) and are by their own conduct condemned. Judas despairs, Peter repents; one robber blasphemes, the other confesses (2 Cor. 2:16). Hence the πτωσις of many is an inevitable result of the manifestation of the Christ.*<sup>145</sup>

The thought goes further. It is a fair assumption that Luke would have been aware of the main themes of Paul's theology, including his concept of representation (2 Cor. 5:14) and of the union between Christ and the believer in his death and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11). This understanding would never have occurred to Simeon, but it may well have been in the mind of Luke. Thus, in the falling and rising again of this child, the falling and rising again of many in Israel will occur.<sup>146</sup> That which is viewed in one sense as a sign which divides between believer and unbeliever, then comes to be viewed as an experience of identification with Christ.<sup>147</sup> The child becomes a representative figure. In this manner the post-resurrection community discovers new meaning in the infancy tradition.

## Mary

The representative role of Mary is admitted by a large number of scholars. This becomes a certainty if one accepts the identification of Mary as the 'Daughter of Zion'. This is not certain but may well be possible.<sup>148</sup> Even if the 'Daughter of Zion' motif were not present in the Lucan narrative, the poetic structure of the Magnificat ensures the representative role of Mary. Raymond Brown stresses the influence of the idea of the Anawim (poor) as the people of God in the intertestamental period on the Lucan hymns. He states in this regard that;

*it is far from clear that Luke used Mary as a personification of Israel or the Daughter of Zion. It may be closer to Luke's thoughts to see Mary as an idealised representative of the Anawim who constituted the remnant of Israel.*<sup>149</sup>

Mention has already been made of Robert Tannahill's detailed analysis of the Magnificat. He shows how the thought is gradually expanded from the experience of a single individual, the 'we' of vs. 49, to the experience of the many in the mention of 'Israel' (vs. 54). <sup>150</sup> The exaltation of this individual from 'low degree' becomes a symbol of the exaltation of God's people in the eschatological event. The song of Mary, in whose womb the Christ was born, thus becomes the song of the redeemed community who are conscious that he has also come to them through the outpouring of the Spirit and the experience of forgiveness in baptism. This representation of Mary cannot be limited, however, to the song of redemption. Her song is found upon her lips as a result of her response to the word of the angel. It has long been recognised that the preaching of the 'Word of God' is one of Luke's principal themes. <sup>151</sup> One of the integral elements of the apostolic kerygma in the Acts is the fact that in Jesus Israel's Messiah has come. The angel brings the same 'word' to Mary. The Messiah is to come, and she will first receive him. She therefore becomes a representative of how the 'word' was first received and therefore how the word should be received. Two aspects of Mary's response are stressed. Firstly, she submitted and obeyed (1:38). In the structure of the 'prophetic call narrative' this is unparalleled. This indicates that Mary's response had some significance for Luke. <sup>152</sup> The theme of the obedience of faith is both Lucan (Acts 6:7) and Pauline (Rom. 1:5). The use of *δουλος* as a description of those who are committed to the Lord is also frequent in the Lucan writings (Acts 2:18; 16:17; Luke 15:19; Acts 20:19; 4:29; 27:23; 20:19; 26:7). As the first *δουλη* Mary becomes the representative of all those who respond to the word of salvation. Secondly, Mary is said to be blessed because she 'believed' (1:45). Again the response of faith is well attested in Lucan theology (Acts 14:33; 9:42; 11:17; 16:31; 22:19; 6:7 12:22; 18:27). It cannot be said that the work of the Spirit in regeneration is prominent in Lucan theology. Luke rather stresses the power of the Spirit in witnessing and the manifestations of the charismatic gifts in the life of the community. <sup>153</sup> However, in view of the Pauline and Johannine stress of the Spirit's work in regeneration (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; John 3:3; 1:12-13), it may be possible to see an allusion to the experience of the believer in Luke 1:35. This point should not be pressed. The other points are clear enough in themselves. Mary's response thus awakens the believer to 'remain steadfast to the Lord with steadfast purpose' (Acts 11:23). The first listeners to this narrative would be able to re-live and re-affirm their response of faith to the 'word of salvation'. The narrative would therefore exercise its prophetic role.

#### Zechariah and Elizabeth

Once the representative role of Mary has been noticed, we are forced to pursue the same pattern in the case of Zechariah. This is by virtue of the contrasting parallelism between the

two annunciations. Many commentators do, in fact, see Zechariah and Elizabeth, the neighbours and kinsfolk of the Judean hill country, and the two aged individuals in the temple, as the representatives of the faithful remnant of Israel. This is made more certain by the use of the popular *δικαιος* for Zechariah and Elizabeth (1:6). It has been maintained that by using such terms for Jewish believers prior to their conversion Luke has weakened the Pauline understanding of justification through faith, as against justification through the keeping of the law.<sup>154</sup> This is debatable, and in fact the portrayal of Zechariah's response to the '*word of salvation*' is particularly damaging to this idea.<sup>155</sup> Zechariah is clearly a representative of the *δικαιος* of Judaism. He stands for the epoch of Israel. His response to the message is a painful affair. The liberty and joy of salvation only comes to him through an unpleasant process (1:63-64, 67ff). He is pictured as one who was waiting and praying for the redemption of Israel (1:13). In true Jewish fashion his hope for the Messiah motivates him to keep the law (1:6). In this manner the Rabbis believed they would hasten the coming of the Messiah. In Acts the Jewish people are similarly noted for their steadfast commitment to the hope of Israel (Acts 26:6-7; 23:6). But the tragedy which Luke describes is that when that hope was fulfilled they could not, or would not believe it (Acts 13:41; 45-46; 7:51-53; 4:1-7; 17-18; 5:17-32). The cause of this blindness is the very law which Zechariah had been so conscientious to keep (Acts 6:13-14). Through this painful process of rejection and reaction, many of the priests were eventually obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7). Zechariah is portrayed as the first example of this kind of dual response. At first he cannot believe that his own prayer has been answered (1:13, 18). Like his countrymen he needs a sign to believe (1:18; Luke 11:16, 29; 23:8). The word of life becomes a word of death to him (1:20f 2 Cor. 2:15-16; Acts 13:46). As with Saul of Tarsus, only harsh treatment will bring him to submit and obey (Luke 1:20-22; Acts 9:8-9). His submission to the word comes late, but it brings him liberation (1:63-64). Thus, if Mary is seen as a representative of the people of God in the church, Zechariah is seen to be a typical representative of religious Judaism. His response is a painful one. The first listeners are therefore warned and exhorted. Perhaps in the role of Zechariah they can re-live the agony of their own emergence from Judaism. They are thereby strengthened in their commitment to the faith (Acts 14:22). The well-known Lucan concern for the relationship between Judaism and Christianity is seen to extend back into the infancy narrative.<sup>156</sup> There is again the evidence of a new significance in the events as they are seen from the post-Easter stance of the community. In the Palestinian tradition there is no suggestion that Zechariah and Elizabeth are *δικαιος* in any sense which is less than genuine.

Luke does not alter this tradition. However, in his use of the parallelism of the two annun-

ciations Zechariah's unbelief is contrasted with Mary's faith. In this manner the 'righteousness' of Zechariah is shown to have been of no assistance to him in the vital demand for an existential response. *'Every mountain has been brought low and the crooked have been made straight'* (Luke 3:5).

The righteousness under the law was no reason for the Jews to be in a better position at the coming of the eschatological salvation. Zechariah's painful response is not the end of the story. His liberation finally comes, and his song of salvation (1:68-79, specially vs. 77 compared with the kerygmatic language in Acts) can also become the song of the redeemed community, including redeemed Jewish Christians.<sup>157</sup>

### The Shepherds

Luke clearly depicts the shepherds in a representative role.<sup>158</sup> The good news which is brought to them ( $\upsilon\mu\omega$  vs. 10,  $\upsilon\mu\omega$  vs. 11) is actually the good news which is *'for all the people'* (vs. 10). The message which they hear is for the peace of *'men with whom he is pleased'* (vs. 14). There can be no mistaking the parallel between the word they received ( $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\iota\zeta\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$   $\upsilon\mu\omega$  vs. 10) and the apostolic evangel. The content of the message, which is both Christological and Soteriological, is an anticipation of the full grown apostolic kerygma. Commentators are divided as to whether the shepherds should be taken as symbolic of the venerable tradition of O.T. shepherds, or the actual shepherds of Judea in the first century, who had the *'unfortunate habit of confusing "mine" with "thine" as they moved about the country'*.<sup>159</sup> The former view has the disadvantage of depending in some manner upon the extreme form of the midrashic theory of interpretation. The latter is more probable.<sup>160</sup> If this image of the shepherds was at all in Luke's mind, then it means that the idea of divine grace is strongly advocated. Of all the inhabitants of Judea, it is the shepherds who receive the most glorious revelation. This interpretation is supported by the general Lucan emphasis on the salvation of the poor and the outcast.<sup>161</sup> The response of the shepherds is to *'glorify and praise God'* (vs. 20). This makes it possible for the listener to identify with them in the worship of the Christian community. If Paul's words in 1 Cor. 1:26-29 are in any way a reflection of the community in which the Lucan infancy tradition was transmitted, then the shepherds would be representative figures with which a large proportion of the community could identify. In the incident of the shepherds, the listener is therefore reminded of the supreme grace which has come to him in salvation. He re-lives the wonder and the majesty of the revelation of the gospel and he is exhorted to praise and glorify his Saviour. Once again the infancy narrative plays a prophetic role.

### Simeon and Anna



The representative role of Anna is more marked than that of Simeon. Raymond Brown raises this question when he comments;

*What is of particular interest is the emphasis on Anna's widowhood of eighty-four years. To what extent has this aspect of Anna's portrayal been painted in the light of an idea of widowhood that Luke knew in the Pauline churches?* <sup>162</sup>

This question must be pushed back a little further. We must ask to what extent the role of Anna is a good representation of the widowhood which was a common feature of the early Christian prophetic community. The widows of the early church obviously played a significant role in the community. This is evident from Acts 6:1 and 9:36-43. Luke's description of the 'saints and widows' in Acts 9:41 is particularly significant. <sup>163</sup> It tends to suggest that the community of the early church was divided into either saints or widow-saints, in other words that the widows constituted a large proportion of the community. In Acts 6 a link is made between Philip and the ministry of the widows. Philip in turn is singled out for his pneumatic characteristics (Acts 6:3-5; 8:4-40), as are his four daughters (Acts 21:8-9). Raymond Brown comments;

*We may speculate whether in Luke's view the celibate status had something to do with the ability to prophesy. The four daughters of Philip who prophesy are unmarried (Acts 21:9)* <sup>164</sup>

One wonders therefore whether pneumatic characteristics were also associated with widowhood. This is confirmed by the evidence from the pastoral epistles. Here a number of parallels can be drawn with Anna. Widows must be at least sixty years old (1 Tim. 5:9). Anna was eighty four. They must have been married only once (1 Tim. 5:9). Anna therefore qualifies (Luke 2:36-37). A real widow is one who is 'left alone', has 'set her hope on the living God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day' (1 Tim. 5:5). The parallel with the solitary figure of Anna 'looking for the redemption of Israel' (Luke 2:38) and 'worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day' (Luke 2:37) is obvious. Anna is therefore a figure with whom a large proportion of the primitive church could have identified. Her initial revelation concerning the eschatological events (the redemption of Israel in the person of this child, Luke 2:38) is a fitting representation of the discovery of faith that had come to many a Hebrew or Hellenistic widow (Acts 6:1). Once again her response is noted, 'she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him' (Luke 2:38). The widows of the primitive pneumatic community would be recalled to their first discovery in the narrative of Anna's discovery.

The theme of revelatory discovery is one which binds Anna with Simeon in a common role. The single theme which seems to unite these two individuals is that of spiritual sight. This motif has already been examined (see 2:15; 2:17; 2:26, 30, 38). The chief characteristic of Simeon may be described as that of prophetic insight, or what Paul termed the '*word of knowledge*' (1 Cor. 12:8). Before the event he had already received the revelation of the Spirit. He entered the Temple '*in the Spirit*'. He then seems to have recognised the child by further revelatory insight. The utterance which follows is itself revelatory. It reveals the future destiny of the child and the future experience of the mother. It seems to contain elements of what Paul termed the '*word of wisdom*' (1 Cor. 12:8). Simeon is therefore a pneumatic individual who '*sees*' the coming of the Messiah in a sense which goes beyond mere physical sight. He is able to penetrate the significance of the event and in a measure anticipate the moment of the event. Anna is portrayed in a similar role. She is a prophetess who spent her life in the presence of God (vs. 37). Her arrival in the Temple was '*at that very hour*'. She immediately began to speak of '*him*' as though the significance of the child was immediately apparent to her. Her insight enables her to utter a word of revelation to '*all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem*'. The presence of the Spirit in her life is not specifically mentioned. It is insinuated. These two individuals are linked by their devoutness, their pneumatic characteristics, their revelatory insight, and their presence in the Temple. These characteristics are to be found again in the Lucan account of the life of the early worshipping community. Prayer is one of Luke's special interests (Acts 7:59f; 9:11; 10:4 10:9; 1:14; 4:23f; 12:12f; 13:3; 3:1; 6:25; 2:42; 14:23; 20:30; 21:5; 9:40; 28:8). The early church was a community of prayer. It was also a pneumatic community and one which lived by the revelation of the Spirit (2:4f; 4:31; 5:3f, 9-11; 5:19-20; 6:8,10; 7:55-56; 8:17,20-22; 29:39; 9:10-16; 31; 10:9-16; 44-46 11:24; 11:27-28; 12:6-11; 13:2,9,52). The first listeners would have seen in Simeon and Anna two of their own kind. Like them, they had also come to '*see*' the real identity of Jesus of Nazareth. As the risen Lord he had also been revealed to them through the Spirit. In the incident of these two devout people in the Temple, the early community would be re-called to a life of prayer, praise, worship and devotion. The importance of the pneumatic life of the community would be underlined, and they would be encouraged to believe that the risen Lord would continually be revealed to them in the place of worship. In this section we may be able to find an element of expectancy regarding the parousia. Anna spoke to all those who were '*looking for the redemption of Jerusalem*' (προσδεχομενοις λυτρωσω Ιερουσαλημ vs. 38). Those who wait for the parousia are told to '*look up and raise your heads, because your redemption (απολυτρωσις) is drawing near*' Luke 21:28.

#### The Circle of Prophets in the Early Christian Community

We may conclude then that the Lucan infancy narrative had its relevance to the community in the area of prophetic exhortation. We have already taken the view that the original *Sitz im Leben* of this tradition developed in the early Palestinian Christian community. This part of our study now suggests that prior to the documentation of that tradition by the evangelist, it had developed in a prophetic environment. This would be the final *Sitz im Leben* of the tradition. In making this suggestion we reject the view that a tradition can only have one *Sitz im Leben*. We suggest that the tradition had two situations, first, one in the life of Jesus, and secondly, one in the life of the community. We must now examine the prophetic elements of the primitive community. It is interesting to notice at this point that Adolf von Harnack suggested that the Lucan infancy tradition could have been passed on to Luke by the daughters of Philip the evangelist.<sup>165</sup> Possibly he was led to this suggestion for the same reasons, i.e. the prophetic nature of the infancy narrative.

Our understanding of the prophetic function follows the thinking of Earle Ellis. Ellis's work has received support from the recent work by David Hill.<sup>166</sup> Ellis believes the prophet's function cannot be entirely distinguished from the teacher or apostle or elder. These terms were not fixed and there could be a considerable amount of overlap between different functions. The whole of the primitive community had in one sense received the prophetic spirit. (Acts 2:16-18). Potentially any believer could prophesy. However, certain individuals are noted as prophets in a special sense (Acts 11:27; 21:10; 13:1; 15:22,32; 21:9). While certain O.T. functions are continued in the N.T. prophet, such as prediction - Acts 11:28; 20:23, 25; 27:22 and symbolical actions - Acts 21:11, the most common description of the N.T. prophet is in terms of '*upbuilding, encouragement and consolation*' (1 Cor. 14:3). The use of *παρακαλεω* and *παρακλησις* is frequent. It is used of John the Baptist (Luke 3:18). Barnabas is particularly noted for his exhortation. Acts 11:23-24 may be taken as the classic description of a prophetic ministry in one who was nicknamed '*Son of encouragement*' (*υιος παρακλησως* 4:36). The connection between exhortation and prophecy is made explicit in the case of Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32). It is again mentioned in connection with Barnabas in Acts 14:20-22. In Lucan terminology the work of the Spirit is connected with *παρακλησις* (Acts 9:31; 15:28,3).

Ellis then tries to show that the ministry of the prophet was involved with the exposition of the scriptures. In this sense they could also be termed teachers. He bases this view mainly upon the fact that the decree of the council in Jerusalem given by the Holy Spirit (15:28) was itself an exhortation (*παρακλησει* 15:31) and was carried by Judas and Silas who thereby exhorted the brethren (15:32). Further, the leaders at Antioch are called '*prophets and teachers*' (Acts 13:1). Outside of the book of Acts he finds evidence for this connection in the prophetic teaching ministry of Jesus, the role of the *maskilim* (teachers) of Qumran and

the Rabbinical association of wisdom, teaching and prophetic revelation. He then concludes that the various synagogue sermons delivered by Paul (a prophet, Acts 13:1) are cases of prophetic biblical interpretation.

This identification of prophets and teachers has problems. Firstly, as Ellis himself realises, why is the term prophet restricted to so few individuals in Acts, and why are apostles, prophets and teachers described as different ministries in Romans 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11 and 1 Cor. 12:28? Secondly, it is not certain that prophets and teachers should be applied to the whole group in Acts 13:1.<sup>167</sup> Thirdly, it is not necessary to identify the Jerusalem decree as itself a prophetic message. It does not read much like a prophetic utterance.<sup>168</sup> Its context does contain an ethical exhortation (15:31), but the prophetic part is ensured by the fact that the brethren who carry it are prophets who are able to exhort the people (15:32). This was probably necessary due to the tense situation which existed. The apostolic decree was therefore delivered in a spirit of goodwill and encouragement. In this way it was more likely to be received. Luke seems to be at pains to stress that the decree was meant to build up rather than to restrict the people legalistically. Fourthly, it is precarious to compare the understanding of prophecy in post-exilic legalistic Judaism with the understanding of prophecy in the eschatological community.

Despite these criticisms, it may well be the case that the roles of prophet and teacher were combined in some sense. The apostolic decree in Acts 15 may possibly have been regarded as a prophetic utterance, and Acts 13:1 may possibly refer to the whole group. Be that as it may, the primary characteristic of the N.T. prophet is one of exhortation. This is made quite clear by Ellis' study. If the prophets were involved in teaching, then the particular nature of their teaching was revelatory rather than catechetical. It was their task to receive a revelation in the worship meetings of the primitive assemblies (1 Cor. 14:29-30). His study has shown that a *Sitz im Leben* did exist for the development of an exhortatory rather than a kerygmatic, catechetical or pastoral tradition. It was in such an environment that the Lucan infancy narrative probably reached its final form.

## Matthew

### The Language of Response in Matthew's Gospel

The accentuation of existential response cannot be found to the same extent in Matthew's Gospel. He does, of course, take over the presence of such response language as it is found in Mark, but does not especially emphasise it. Further, of all the Gospels, Matthew's is most clearly adapted for catechetical purposes. This may suggest that the infancy narrative was recorded for catechetical purposes. This suggestion is supported by the presence of seven

formula quotations in the Matthean prologue. The only difficulty with this view is that the infancy narrative is without any catechetical content. There is no teaching which can guide the believer in his life of faith. This may lead to the conclusion that the infancy narrative is merely recorded for the purposes of Matthew's fulfilment motif.

One vital element does, however, indicate that there is more to be found in the infancy narrative. Heinz Joachim Held has shown that Matthew is particularly concerned to bring out the relationship between the request of faith, the word of Jesus, and the miraculous deed of Jesus. He does this by means of catch-words which he uses to draw out the connection between these three elements in the miracle stories. A typical example is found in the healing of the leper. The catch-words may be arranged as follows:

Matt. 8.2      εαν                    θελης            δυνασαι με      καθαρισαι

Matt. 8:3a                    θελω                                    καθαρισθητι

Matt. 8:3b                                    και ευθεις      εκαθαρισθη    αυτου η λεπρα

It is true that similar catch-words can be found in the Markan tradition (Mark 1:40-42), but Held finds that this phenomenon is particularly prevalent in the Matthean material. For instance, it is found in Matt. 14:28-29 where there is an amount of special Matthean material (compare Mark 6:45-52). He concludes;

*Where the formula about faith appears in Matthew's miracle stories, it always points towards what the suppliant person has spoken. The faith is expressed in the request; and Jesus acts in a way that corresponds to the suppliant faith...these measures serve to bring out the essential connection between faith and the miracle in the mere course of the story, in that everything superfluous, not directly pointing to the matter in hand, is omitted.* <sup>169</sup>

## The Semic Figures in the Infancy Narrative

### Joseph, Herod and Jesus

Held finds the same catch-word characteristics in Matt. 1:20-25. They may be arranged as follows:

|                  |            |                |
|------------------|------------|----------------|
| Matt. 1:20/24    | παραλαβειω | την γυναικα    |
| Matt. 1:21/23/25 | τικτειω    | υιον           |
| Matt. 1:21/23/25 | καλειω     | το ονομα αυτου |

Held's work shows that Matthew had his own response language. He accentuates the response relationship between Jesus and the individual in a different manner. The difference between Luke and Matthew is that where as in the case of the former the deed of Jesus is the challenge and the faith or reaction of the individual is the response, in the case of the latter the challenge, as it were, comes from the request of the individual and the response comes from the word or action of Jesus. Where in Luke's case the individual is a passive receiver who marvels or rejoices or praises, in the case of Matthew the individual's faith is shown to be active. This observation leads to an extraordinary discovery in the Matthean infancy narrative. Against his usual habit, Matthew shows the act of God in the angelic declaration to constitute the challenge and the simple obedience of Joseph to constitute the response. Instead of being active in faith, Joseph is passive in obedience. Held has not noticed that Matt. 1: 20-24 operates in reverse order from the general Matthean pattern. Yet at the same time the typically Matthean use of catch-words is quite evident. The same literary method is used, but this time in order to stress the opposite pole of the challenge-response dynamic. This suggests that Matthew is concerned to bring out the obedience of Joseph. The angel commanded Joseph to *παραλαβεν την γυναικα* (vs. 20). Joseph's response is expressed in exactly the same terminology: *παραλαβεν την γυναικα αυτου* (vs.24). The angel commanded Joseph to *καλεις το ονομα αυτον Ιησουν* (vs.21). Joseph did exactly that, he *εκαλεσεν το ονομα αυτον Ιησουν*. Verse 24 further emphasises the obedience of Joseph: *εποιησεν ωσ προσηταξεν αυτω ο αγγελος κυριου*.

Further, he did this immediately *εγερθεις δε ο Ιωσηφ απο του υπνου*. In addition, Held does not mention the fact that this catch-word emphasis on obedience is not only found in 1:20-25. A noticeable feature of the Matthean infancy narrative is that it is found to be repeated in exactly the same manner on three occasions (1:20-25; 2:13-14; 20-21). In each case the predominant emphasis is the obedience of Joseph. One can say that alongside the eschatological and Messianic motifs of the infancy narrative is the obedience motif. This indicates that the Matthean infancy narrative has a resemblance to the Lucan infancy. The language of response is repeated. Further, it is not enough to conclude that this is merely a Matthean literary device. As Held has shown in the other cases, the literary device is used as the service of a theological affirmation about faith. This means that in this case the literary device is also at the service of a theological affirmation. That affirmation is clear: it is obedience to the divine word of revelation.

As soon as this motif has become evident, the reader will notice a second motif of response which runs exactly counter to the response of Joseph. This is in the reaction of Herod. It is not described by the use of catch-words, but by the description of a mounting drama. Firstly, *'when Herod the king heard this, he was troubled'*. Secondly, *'Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him'* (2:13b). Thirdly, we are told, *'Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem'* (2:16).

The second chapter is linked together by the Herod theme (2:1,2,7,12,13,14,16,19,22). There are thus three individuals that run through the narrative; Jesus, Joseph and Herod. All three have some share in the inheritance of the Davidic monarchy. The arrival of the one sets the remaining two in reaction, and their reactions are in total antithesis. This is similar to the Lucan narrative. The response of Zechariah is set over against the response of Mary. Here the response of Herod is set over against the response of Joseph. Once again both hear what amounts to the word of salvation. The evangel is proclaimed by the angel of the Lord, as in the Lucan narrative, and as it would be proclaimed in the word of Jesus and in the apostolic kerygma. To both Joseph and Herod it causes an element of crises. For Joseph, his whole social status, and above all his masculine ego, is threatened. As Karl Barth has argued in some detail, in the infancy narrative Joseph's male role is completely put aside. This is not because there is something sinful about sex, but because human masculinity is a sign of man's own willing, working, achieving and creating. The virgin birth indicates that in the event of salvation man is only the receiver. He cannot work his own salvation.<sup>170</sup> The response of Joseph is therefore a sign of the total humility of faith that is called for in the existential demand of the kerygma. His complete lack of protest and utter obedience to the divine will becomes the example of how every man should respond to the proclamation that Messiah has come. It is remarkable that in the two infancy narratives, which are so evidently independent of each other, the same characteristics are to be found in the two parents of Jesus. This may indicate either that the two traditions were moulded by the same type of community or that there was some inner quality about the historical tradition which led to such interpretations.

A similar crisis came to Herod. We have already mentioned the dramatic balance between *'Herod the king'* (2:1) and *'he who has been born king of the Jews'* (2:2). This draws out the situation of threat and counter threat. Again it is the pride of man that is brought to a crisis of existential decision. Herod was king. Now another king has come. He is called

upon to renounce his own position of sovereignty and go and 'worship him' (2:8). Herod himself is aware of this demand. The only fitting response is to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Romans 10:9; Phil. 2:10). But Herod's egotism is too much for him. He would rather affirm that '*Herod is King*'. In desperate fury he attempts to obliterate this challenge to his position. There is a telling play on the reality of death. Herod wishes to kill all the male children, and therefore kill the Messiah. The story ends with the words '*those who sought for the child's life are dead*' (vs. 20). Herod, as the head of the Jewish nation, thus becomes the symbol of all those who reject the Messiah. The true reasons for such a rejection are made plain by the infancy narrative. All those who wish to maintain their own autonomy will react to the coming of the Messiah as Herod did. The primitive community continued to experience not only the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish nation, but the activities of the Herods (Acts 4:27; 12:1; 12:20-21). Notably, when another Herod attempted to proclaim his own sovereignty in defiance of God (Acts 12:22) the '*angel of the Lord smote him because he did not give God the Glory*' (12:23). The similarity between the two situations could hardly have been missed by those who were aware of the Matthean infancy tradition in the early church. As with the Lucan figures of the infancy narrative, Herod takes on a representative role. He was troubled '*and all Jerusalem with him*' (2:3).

*Herod may be understood not only as a suspicious and hostile king who tried to kill the infant Messiah, but also as the representative of Jewish hostility to the new Church in those days of its beginning in Palestine. It seems likely that the writer of Matthew 2 actually had this representative capacity of his personages in mind.* <sup>171</sup>

*Once the birth has become the vehicle of the good news of salvation, there follows the inevitable reaction to the proclamation that "Jesus is Lord". Historically, when the salvific proclamation was made after the resurrection, there was a two-fold reaction. Some believed it and came to worship the exalted Lord...others rejected both the message and the preachers. And when the evangelist looked back into the life of Jesus with post resurrectional hind sight, he could see the same two-fold reaction... Accordingly, the evangelist presents the same two-fold reaction to the divine proclamation of Jesus the Messiah and Emmanuel at his conception. Chapter 2 becomes for Matthew the anticipation of the fate of the good news of salvation, a fate that he knew in the after-math of the resurrection.* <sup>172</sup>

The Matthean infancy narrative would therefore similarly play a prophetic role in the



church. Each believer had been faced by the crisis of decision. The Lordship of Christ had become a threat to his autonomy. He had to choose whether to accept or reject the sovereignty of the Messiah. Like Joseph, he could humble himself and become obedient to the faith, or like Herod, he could re-affirm his own sovereign autonomy and perish. The infancy narrative thus provided a powerful motivation for the community to re-affirm its commitment to the Lordship of Christ. In hearing the infancy story, the believer could re-live his own existential response to the kerygma.

### The Chief Priests, the Scribes and the Magi

The antithesis between the response of Joseph and the response of Herod leads the reader to notice a further contrast between the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem, in league with Herod, and the Magi. *The story of the Magi is a study in contrasts!*<sup>173</sup> In this regard it is important to bear in mind that of all the Gospels, Matthew seems to have had the most positive attitude towards the law. He was concerned to show the positive value which could be given to the Jewish law once it had been transformed by the Messianic age, and he was concerned to warn against the danger of antinomianism.<sup>174</sup> At the same time, however, Matthew had no intention of glossing over the arid legalism of pharisaic Judaism. This becomes plain from a comparison of Matthew 23:1-39 with the equivalent Lucan redaction of Q (Luke 11:37-54) and a comparison of Matthew 15:1-20 with the Markan source (Mark 7:1-13; Matt. 15:12-15 is not found in Mark. Its content is significant). Some scholars have even advocated the view that Matthew was involved in a strongly anti-Jewish polemic. This probably goes too far. Clearly he was involved in an exposure of pharisaical casuistry. *Matthew feels that the Pharisees have missed altogether the true meaning of the Scriptures!*<sup>175</sup> Another Matthean theological concern is that of universalism. Matthew holds Jewish particularism and Christian universalism in a careful balance.<sup>176</sup> Both these Matthean theological themes are to be found in the contrast between the Magi and the Jewish religious leaders in Matt. 2. At the birth of the Messiah the chief priests and scribes of the people could correctly ascertain the place of Messiah's birth from the inspired writings (Matt. 2:4-6; 5:17-18). The fault was not with the scriptures themselves. The Magi, who only had the benefit of natural revelation were unable to discover the exact place of the child's birth, and needed to be guided by the inspired scriptures.

*It was through nature that God revealed himself to the Gentiles (see Rom. 1:19-20; 2:14-15), and so Matthew shows the Magi receiving a revelation through astrology...*

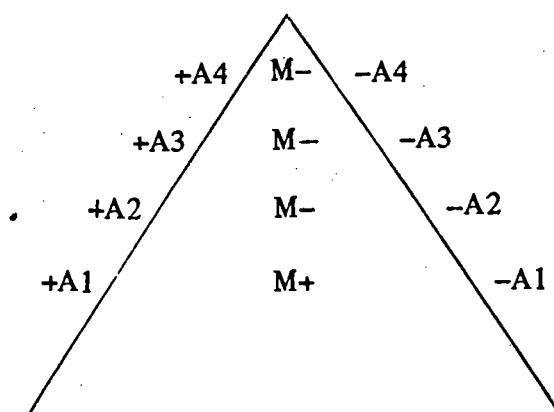
*This is an imperfect revelation: for while it tells them of the birth, it does not tell them where they can find the King of the Jews. The ultimate secret of his whereabouts is looked for in the special revelation of the God of Israel, in the scriptures.* <sup>177</sup>

Yet there is something which is ironic about the situation. The Jewish leaders, who had the great benefit of this special revelation, were condemned from the start by their sheer passivity. *'They fail by being passive'* <sup>178</sup> They made no attempt to find the Messiah. They were completely unprepared to believe that he had been born, despite their profession of longing for the hope of Israel (Acts 26:5-7). Here was an intellectual knowledge of the law which would never lead to salvation (John 5:39-40). In utter contrast, the Magi began this search for the Messiah through the mere glimmering of a star. They went on what may have been a long and difficult journey. Their determination to find him was eventually rewarded. They *'rejoiced exceedingly with great joy'* (2:10). This is a rather weak translation of *εχαρησαν χαραν μεγαλην σφοδρα*. Their lavish giving matches Joseph's utter obedience.

Here again the future history of the proclamation of the Gospel is anticipated. This pattern would be repeated over and over again. Those who knew the law would reject the fulfilment of that law, while those who were hardly educated in the law would press into the kingdom of God (Rom. 10. 18-21). This history would have been all too real to the first listeners of this narrative. Some of them had sought until they had found. Others would have been those who with difficulty had transcended the confines of their legalism. Perhaps some would have been tempted to return to the traditional religion (Heb. 13:4-14). The infancy narrative would therefore exercise a prophetic role. The listeners would be able to re-live the radical decision which they first made and would thus be exhorted to continue in the faith.

### A Structural Illustration

The prophetic significance of the challenge-response dynamic in the semic figures of the narrative can be illustrated by Levi-Strauss' model of binary oppositions.



A = antinomy or opposition.

+A = the positive pole of the binary opposition.

-A = the negative pole of the binary opposition.

M+ = the mediatory function between the two poles of the binary opposition, the Annuciation-revelatory event.

M- = the absence of a mediatory function.

+A1 = The New Age.

-A1 = the Old Age.

+A2 = faith.

-A2 = unbelief.

+A3 = acceptance response.

-A3 = rejection response.

+A4 = divine approval, joy and blessing.

-A4 = divine retribution, sorrow and death.

The model indicates the following. The fundamental binary opposition of the infancy narrative, and in fact the N.T. in general, is between the old age and the new age. The basic tension of N.T. theology is to found at this level.<sup>179</sup> The church's whole existence is held in the duality of eschatological tension between the '*already*' and the '*not yet*'. This opposition is evident from the relationship between paradigm 1 and 2 in the paradigmatic-syntagmatic grid.

This duality between the old age and the new age is mediated in the infancy narratives by the annunciation-revelatory event. The annunciation creates a transition between the old age and the new age, but this binary opposition is never explicitly mentioned in the infancy narratives (+A1/M+/-A1). It is constantly alluded to and expressed in a less extreme binary opposition of faith and unbelief (+A2/-A2). Those who believe enter into the blessings of the new age. Those who do not believe remain in the old age. This opposition is sometimes stated in the text, for instance in the case of Zechariah and Mary. More often it is expressed by another binary opposition between the acceptance and rejection of the annunciation-revelatory event (+A3/-A3). Herod is troubled and cannot receive the message. This amounts to a rejection of the revelatory event. The shepherds immediately act upon the words of the angelic host. This amounts to an open acceptance of the revelatory event. The acceptance-rejection opposition is often expressed by another binary opposition reflecting the display of human emotions (+A4/-A4). The Magi rejoice with great joy. So does Mary (the Magnificat). The shepherds give glory to God. Simeon expresses his deep satisfaction. On the other hand, Herod is filled with anger. Zechariah is struck dumb. What is most significant is that while the fundamental binary opposition is mediated by God himself in the revelatory event (M+) the subsequent or more surface oppositions are left for men to grapple with (M+ is replaced by M-). This highlights the dynamic of challenge and response and emphasises the crisis of existential decision. This structural understanding of the text can be grasped in any age by those who stand within the same tradition of redemptive history. This is why the synchronic approach to the text is possible and necessary. There is no need to enter into the environment of the first century in any exhaustive sense in order to understand the structural dynamics and semantic features of the narratives that arose out of that environment. Herein lies the prophetic nature of the text. It is applicable to the community of faith at any time.

## Conclusion

The infancy narratives thus present to us, firstly, the arrival of the eschatological age. Secondly, this age is centred in the arrival of a Messianic child. This eschatological event constitutes an existential challenge to those parties which first experienced it. Clustered around the birth of this child are a number of principal figures. Each, in his or her own way, reacts to this challenge. Their various reactions become the representation of all those responses that took place in the apostolic proclamation of the post-resurrection kerygma. The post-resurrection community therefore discerns new meaning in the historical tradition of Christ's infancy, and both infancy narratives take on a prophetic function. They enable the believers to re-live the crisis of their initial existential commitment to the Lordship of Christ. They operate as exhortatory traditions which recall the listeners to this faith. The believer must continually face the challenge. Will he disbelieve like Zechariah, or believe like Mary? Will he humble himself and obey like Joseph, or will he assert his own autonomy like

Herod and perish in the process? Will he become infatuated with an intellectual knowledge of the law, or will he seek the risen Lord and worship him with great joy? Will he be found in the place of worship like Simeon and Anna, and will he be in the Spirit, open to the revelation of the risen Lord, and ready for the parousia? With the shepherds of Judah does he still appreciate the grace of God which came to him when he was as yet, unworthy? These decisions would have to be faced. The infancy narratives would force him to make them.

## PROPHECY, ESCHATOLOGY, CHRISTOLOGY, AND HISTORY

This investigation of Christology in the N.T. documents has attempted to give attention to both general and specific issues. The specific section we have investigated is the infancy narratives. This investigation has been undertaken with the more general issues of methodology, historiography and Christology constantly in mind. The results of the detailed investigation of this particular section can now be related back to the general issues of N.T. study. These can be expressed in terms of four basic concepts, namely prophecy, eschatology, Christology and history. All four concepts or areas of enquiry meet in the study of the infancy narratives. More significantly the infancy narratives have a particular contribution to make to these issues. Our primary concern is of course with Christology, but the infancy narratives have a contribution to make to N.T. Christology which can only be properly understood in terms of the related concepts of prophecy, eschatology and history. In our study so far we have dealt firstly with history, then eschatology, then Christology and then prophecy. We will now change this order and discuss firstly prophecy, then eschatology, then Christology, and lastly history.

### PROPHECY

Prophecy has been related to the infancy narratives in terms of what we have called '*prophetic exhortation*.' The prophetic element can, however, be associated with the infancy narratives on a broader scale.

1. Firstly, on a surface reading of the infancy narratives it becomes evident that Luke's narrative is well endowed with prophetic utterances. Zechariah (Lk.1.67f), Elizabeth (1.41f), Mary (1.46f), Simeon (2.28f) and Anna (2.38) are all '*prophets*' in some sense. Even the various angelic revelations read like prophetic utterances (1.14f; 1.32f; 2.10). These elements give a certain kind of prophetic connotation to the entire Lucan narrative and point beyond themselves to the possibility of a more profound sense of the prophetic in the infancy narratives.
2. Secondly, on deeper investigation of the Lucan narrative it becomes evident that the structure of the annunciation to Zechariah and the annunciation to Mary form part of a broad biblical structure which may be termed the '*prophetic call narrative*.'<sup>1</sup> The dynamics of the narrative operate in similar fashion to the calls of various O.T. proph-

ets such as Gideon, Moses, Jeremiah, Abraham, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. This structure raises the question of whether these two figures are being portrayed in a prophetic role. Both the utterances with which they are credited and the way in which they receive the annunciation point to a prophetic role for Zechariah and Mary. The prophetic call narrative is expanded in a particular point in the case of Mary, where her response is unparalleled in terms of the literary genre of the prophetic call narrative.

3. Thirdly, this raises the question of whether the idea of response is especially important in the infancy narrative of Luke. Further investigation more than answers this question. Both infancy narratives have a particular emphasis on the language of response. The study of the *'response'* language uncovers a more comprehensive structure than the prophetic call narrative. A structural analysis of the infancy narratives reveals a repeated structure of challenge and response. This consists of an eschatological fulfilment centred on a Christological announcement or revelation, which in turn calls for and produces an existential response.<sup>2</sup> The study of the challenge-response structure leads to a further discovery. Each personage in the narratives has a semic dimension. The principal figures become representative figures who stand for various groups within and without the primitive community. The challenge-response dynamic of figures in the infancy narratives becomes a paradigm of the dynamics of challenge and response in all those who have heard the proclamation of the early witnesses to Christ.<sup>3</sup>

This structure of challenge and response is not however used in the infancy narratives to bring people to faith in Christ. The material of these narratives is not kerygmatic. It is used rather for the purposes of exhortation. The dynamics of challenge and response in the semic personages of the infancy narratives operates as a powerful exhortation to the reader that is addressed. It is assumed that the reader stands within the community of faith. He is challenged to review his original response to the proclaimed word and to *'remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose'* (Ac.11.23).

The nature of the infancy narratives and the fundamental structure which they reveal indicates that their form and essential message was addressed to a particular situation in the primitive church by a particular group or individual vitally concerned with the exhortation of the people of God. This has led us to conclude that these narratives were shaped and transmitted by individuals who were involved in an exhortatory or prophetic ministry. For a number of reasons it is evident that the prophets of the primitive community were primarily involved in an exhortatory type of ministry.<sup>4</sup> The infancy narratives can best be explained in terms of the prophetic ministry of the early Christian community. It is not ultimately possible to decide whether these

characteristics come from the evangelists themselves, in their handling of the infancy traditions, or whether these characteristics were shaped by the community that transmitted the tradition. It is probably best to conclude that both factors were involved. The evangelists certainly presented the text in a way which expressed the challenge-response dynamic. However our structural analysis tends to indicate that the structure lies below the surface of the text. It indicates an almost subconscious structure which constitutes the very essence of the infancy tradition. This indicates that the role of the evangelists is secondary while the role of those who transmitted the tradition to them is primary. The most probable conclusion is that the infancy traditions were received, absorbed, moulded and transmitted by the various *'prophetic'* individuals in the early community. The indications are that these prophets operated in small groups (Ac.11.27-28). Some such group must be seen as the custodian of the infancy traditions. The deep structure is their responsibility. The present textual structure is the responsibility of the two evangelists who incorporated them into the first and third gospels. Here then is the transmissional Sitz im Leben for the infancy narratives. This statement immediately raises two further questions. Firstly, by transmissional Sitz im Leben do we not exclude an original historical Sitz im Leben? Our discussion of *'history'* must grapple with the possibility of an original historical setting or series of events that gave rise to the infancy tradition. At this point we are merely discussing various marks in the narratives which indicate that they were moulded and transmitted by early Christian prophets. Secondly, by *'transmission'* or *'moulding'* we do not refer to what has been termed the *'creative role of Christian prophets.'* This point will be expanded on after we have discussed the various prophetic characteristics of the infancy narratives.

4. Fourthly, the infancy narratives are prophetic in the particular type of interpretation which they reveal. At this point we must return to the work of Earle Ellis. We noted in the fifth chapter Ellis' views on the exhortatory role of the early Christian prophets. Ellis has noted other typical characteristics in the early Christian prophets which are especially associated with the midrashic type of biblical exegesis. His understanding draws together various developments in the O.T., intertestamentary and N.T. writings. He traces a development which began with the O.T. prophets and continued in the apocalyptic writers, the Qumran commentators and the pneumatic prophets of the Pauline community. This development shows that the prophetic tradition of the O.T. became increasingly identified with the *'wisdom'* tradition.<sup>5</sup> In the O.T., figures such as Joseph (Gen.41.38f), Joshua (Deut.34), David(2 Sam.14.20), Ahitophel (2 Sam. 16.23) and Solomon ( I Kgs.1.3,9,28; 7.15 - 17), were associated with a special gift of wisdom, although as late as Jeremiah's time the prophets and the wise were regarded as



separate classes (Jer.18.18). Many scholars believe that there is evidence of a shift towards the wisdom tradition in the prophets Isaiah and Amos. In Daniel the prophetic tradition merges into the wisdom tradition. The *'prophet'* is given gifts of wisdom and knowledge ( 1.4,17; 2.21f). Here an added element emerges in the idea of wisdom. Daniel is given wisdom to understand dreams and visions ( 2.27 - 30; 5.12), to *'make known the mystery'* (2.47) and to interpret (*peshet*) the inner meaning of scripture (9.2,22f - i.e. Jeremiah). Later on the wise will be able to read and understand Daniel's writings (12.9f). During this period prophecy became increasingly associated with the scriptures and their interpretation. The apocalyptic tradition was continued in the Qumran community where the *maskilim* were those to whom God revealed the mysteries of the scriptures;

*the maskilim at Qumran are recipients and transmitters of divine mysteries, possessors of wisdom, interpreters of knowledge, guides to a mature life, and discerners of spirits.<sup>6</sup>*

The apocalyptic movement as it emerged at Qumran gave rise to what has been termed the midrashic method of biblical exegesis. That which began as a purely targumic (translatory) practice developed into a midrashic (interpretative) practice where an essential element was the giving of the inner meaning, or mystery of the text, by the Holy Spirit. At Qumran a particular characteristic of such midrashic interpretation was that it was usually eschatological. The ancient text was believed to have been fulfilled in the present. The exegesis of the *maskilim* at Qumran was thus both charismatic and eschatological.<sup>7</sup> Both the charismatic and the midrashic forms of interpretation can be found in the early church. Although there is no explicit connection between the two elements, their association in intertestamentary Judaism and their dual presence in the N.T. writings makes it more than probable that they also went hand in hand in the early church. The charismatic element in biblical interpretation is to be found in the pneumatic prophets of the Pauline communities.<sup>8</sup>

*The early Christian prophets and teachers explained the Old Testament by what they called charismatic exegesis,...Like the teachers of Qumran, they proceeded from the conviction that the meaning of the Old Testament is a "mystery" where "interpretation" can be given not by human reason, but by the Holy Spirit. On the basis of revelation from the Spirit they are confident of their ability to rightly interpret the Scriptures. Equally, they conclude that those who are*

*not gifted cannot "know" the true meaning of the word of God.<sup>9</sup>*

The midrashic element is widely distributed in the N.T. writings.

*If midrash pesher is understood as an interpretative moulding of the text within an apocalyptic framework ad hoc or with reference to appropriate textual or targumic traditions, then there is some evidence for its use on a rather advanced scale, even in the pre-Pauline strata of the New Testament.<sup>10</sup>*

It follows from Ellis' conclusions that evidence of this type of midrashic exegesis in the infancy narratives points to the influence of pneumatic or prophetic interpreters or transmitters of the infancy tradition. We have shown that there is much evidence of midrash in both infancy narratives, provided that we are speaking of Christian midrash. This is probably more pronounced in Matthew's infancy narrative; in the genealogy and the various testimonia.<sup>11</sup> The Lucan narrative is also not without its midrashic features.<sup>12</sup> It is not surprising therefore for Ellis to conclude (Concerning Luke 1 - 2);

*It is probable that family traditions about the events surrounding Jesus' birth were given their literary formulation by prophets of the primitive Jerusalem church.<sup>13</sup>*

In our opinion the same applies equally to the Matthean infancy narrative.

The infancy narratives therefore represent the influence of those who believed that they had a special charismatic or prophetic insight into the events that surrounded the birth of Christ. The particular form of the narrative, both in its midrashic features, and in its dynamic challenge and response structure, is due to the influence of some group of early Christian prophets.

5. Fifthly, the infancy narratives are prophetic in the particular view of history which they represent. In Matthew's infancy narrative the history of Israel is seen to be repeated in the history of the Christ, and in particular in the events of his childhood.<sup>14</sup> History is quite definitely planned and directed by God towards its Christological fulfilment. Likewise the Lucan infancy narrative is fundamentally concerned with the new age as the age of fulfilment. Events which take place in history are 'fulfilled' events.<sup>15</sup>

The prophetic confessional stance of the infancy narratives may be summed up in the following propositions;

1. When the birth of Jesus Christ took place it was ushered in by a restoration of the prophetic gift among the people of God.
2. The real meaning of the events that occurred during this time can only be understood by those who have both the spiritual wisdom and the insight to grasp the inner mystery of the events, i.e. by those who have pneumatic-charismatic gifts.
3. Those who have these gifts are convinced that many O.T. scriptures find their true fulfilment and meaning in the events that surrounded the birth of Christ.
4. Those who have these gifts have also discovered that the various groups and types in the present believing communities are typologically represented in the principle figures who experienced these events, and who responded to them in various ways. Their responses, like the scriptures themselves, are given as a warning and an exhortation to the believers to remain faithful to their commitment (1 Cor.10.11; Rom.15.4).
5. Those who have these gifts can see from the events surrounding Christ's birth that history is planned and governed by God for the revelation of his saving purposes to man.<sup>16</sup>

These characteristics in the infancy narratives are illuminated in particular by two approaches to the text of the N.T.; by the existential approach and the structural approach. Existentialist hermeneutics has been rightly criticised for its negative attitude towards history and for its anthropological preoccupation. However this should not blind us to the fact that the perception of the prophetic nature of the infancy narratives stems, via Minear, from Sören Kierkegaard.<sup>17</sup> This leads to the suggestion that the existential approach should be linked in particular with the prophetic elements in the N.T. Further, the characteristics of the infancy narratives have been connected in our research with 'response' language in the remainder of the first and third gospels. This leads to the suggestion that the remainder of the N.T., or at least the synoptic gospels, may be fruitfully explored for similar prophetic elements. In particular the conjunction of eschatological fulfilment, Christological revelation and existential response, may be present as a deep structure in the remainder of the N.T.

The structuralist approach has been helpful in taking us beyond the rather arid results of the traditional approaches to the infancy narratives. When these are approached with some prior understanding of the text, and when the Christology of these narra-

tives is explored from a purely dogmatic or historiographical perspective, they yield a rather meagre hermeneutical harvest. But when they are analysed in terms of their own inner structural relationships, a wealth of meaning is discovered which allows the true theology of the infancy narratives to be manifested.

Before proceeding to the subject of eschatology, we must return to the question which we raised regarding the transmissional role of the early Christian prophets. Did they merely mould and interpret the infancy narratives, or was their role actually creative in the sense that they created the traditions themselves? If it can be shown that the early Christian prophets actually created authoritative tradition, then the historicity of the infancy narratives will be cast into doubt by the prophetic characteristics which we have discovered in them. If on the other hand their creative role cannot be demonstrated from the N.T. in general then we shall be led to conclude that the infancy traditions were only moulded and interpreted by the early Christian prophets. It is not necessary to discuss this matter in detail since it has been argued at some length by various scholars. At this point it is sufficient to say that we accept the views of David Hill and Ellis on this matter. In an important article David Hill has investigated the common assumption that the utterances of Christian prophets were regarded as synonymous with the words of Jesus. His conclusion is that there is absolutely no evidence for this idea at all. The prophets of the early church had no creative role in terms of authoritative church traditions about Jesus.<sup>18</sup> Ellis examines the *λεγει κυριως* sayings in the N.T., the *ωα πληρωθη* sayings, and the *πισπος ο λογος* formula in the pastoral epistles.<sup>19</sup> In all of these he detects the role of Christian prophets; but he never suggests that this role amounted to the creation of the tradition. Rather, it applied to the interpretation of the tradition, and to the exhortation of the community. We conclude therefore that the early Christian prophets most probably received the infancy traditions, and merely moulded and interpreted them.

## ESCHATOLOGY

1. The first significant feature of the eschatology of the infancy narratives is the connection between prophecy and eschatology. We have demonstrated that these narratives are thoroughly prophetic. Their shape and form is the product of prophetic groups in the early church. Our exegetical study has shown that their content is thoroughly eschatological.<sup>19</sup> This means that it is the prophetic view of history which produces the eschatological emphasis. Those who moulded the tradition did so in a way which accentuated the eschatological nature of the events. It is therefore the prophetic insight or vision that can perceive that events have eschatological content. In the

Lucan narrative we have the repeated use of words to do with sight.<sup>20</sup> In both narratives we have the preponderance of revelatory language.<sup>21</sup> The events are therefore only recognised as eschatological events by the prophetic mind.

This is a point which N.T. research needs to recover. Eschatology has remained a subject of considerable debate ever since the work of Johannes Weiss.<sup>22</sup> A continuing problem is the relationship of the ancient eschatological view of history to the modern mind. Can modern man really accept the eschatological perspective of the N.T. writers? The answer provided by the infancy narratives is that the mind of the common man in the first century also struggled to accept that certain events were in fact eschatological, but that with a prophetic or pneumatic insight such difficulties could be transcended. In fact, without prophetic insight history will never be viewed from an openly eschatological perspective, and the perspective of the N.T. will never be fully understood. R.Maddox has come close to making this point. After a discussion of the opposing views of N.T. interpretation (i.e. consistent eschatology versus realised eschatology) and the various attempts to find a synthesis between the two views (G.E.Ladd and D.B.Knox) Maddox comes to the conclusion that the formal inconsistency between the futurity and the presence of eschatological fulfilment will never be completely solved. The N.T. does contain two formally inconsistent ideas. *'That is why the search for the logical sense of eschatology is always doomed to frustration, or at most only partial illumination.'* His answer to the problem is, that *'In hearing the New Testament proclamation we have in mind too much the model of philosophic or scientific discourse, and too little the model of artistic sensibility.'*<sup>23</sup>

We disagree with Maddox only in the last phrase. Instead of the model of *'artistic sensibility'* N.T. research needs to recover the model of prophetic insight. This is the preception which the infancy narratives advocate. In this the infancy narratives merely take us back to the prophetic view of history in the O.T. G.E.Ladd has made a similar observation concerning the relationship between the prophetic perspective and the modern mind.

*The modern mind is interested in chronology, in sequence, in time. The prophetic mind usually was not concerned with such questions, but took its stand in the present and viewed the future as a great canvas of God's redemptive working in terms of height and breadth, but lacking the clear dimensions of depth.*<sup>24</sup>

His comments, like those of Maddox, are concerned with the relationship between the presence and future of the Kingdom in the N.T. However, both writers accept that eschatology must be understood prophetically if it is to be truly understood.

2. The second contribution of the infancy narratives is in this precise area of consistent versus realised eschatology. The rediscovery of the central place of apocalyptic and eschatological ideas in the N.T., and in the preaching of Jesus, may be attributed to Johannes Weiss.<sup>25</sup> Weiss' insights went hand in hand with the issue that has led to the greatest discussion, namely, that Jesus viewed the Kingdom as purely future. Weiss interpreted all the elements in the preaching of Jesus that indicated the presence of the Kingdom as *'Moments of sublime prophetic enthusiasm when an awareness of victory came over him.'*<sup>26</sup> Apart from such moments Jesus viewed the Kingdom as a completely future, though imminent, reality. Weiss' views were then taken to their logical conclusion by Schweitzer and his concept of *'consistent eschatology.'*<sup>27</sup>

These views may be regarded as the thesis in modern views of eschatology. The antithesis was provided by C.H. Dodd's idea of realised eschatology, where the passages dealing with the futurity of the Kingdom were given a symbolic value or exeged in such a way that the element of futurity was denied.<sup>28</sup>

The scholar who largely initiated the synthesis between these two extremes was W.G. Kümmel.<sup>29</sup> According to Kümmel the important texts, if carefully studied

*demolish the arguments for these descriptions of Jesus' message according to which Jesus announced either only eschatological occurrences in the future or only a present time of eschatological fulfilment.*<sup>30</sup>

The synthetic view has gained ground in N.T. scholarship so that Ladd can comment; *'So extensively is this synthesis to be found that we must recognise it as an emerging consensus.'*<sup>31</sup> The problem has however emerged again with the development of redaction-criticism, where the particular theologies of the various evangelists have become the focus of discussion. In particular Luke's understanding of eschatology has been hotly debated. Conzelmann has advocated the view that Luke has de-eschatologised the tradition. Instead of the imminent expectation of the parousia, the parousia has been pushed into the distant future and has been replaced by Luke's understanding of salvation history.<sup>32</sup> Conzelmann has been taken one step further by R.H. Hiers, who has in many ways returned to the view of Weiss. He notes that for

Conzelmann, Luke believed the Kingdom was '*manifested*' in Jesus but yet to come. Hiers would rather say that Luke believed that the '*message*' of the Kingdom was present while the Kingdom itself was yet future. According to Hiers Luke has deliberately altered the eschatological passages to show that the Kingdom is future but '*near*'.<sup>33</sup> Over against Hiers is the view of F.O. Francis, who believes that Luke has accentuated the fact that the Kingdom is present in fulfilment and will come speedily in the future.<sup>34</sup> The same thesis and antithesis has therefore emerged again in Lucan studies. Once again a synthesis has been produced, this time by Ellis, who shows that present and future are held together in a careful balance in the Lucan writings.<sup>35</sup> Ellis emphasises that the old age and the new age relate together in terms of continuity and discontinuity.<sup>36</sup>

Our examination of the eschatology of the Lucan infancy narratives supports Ellis' understanding of Lucan theology and shows that Luke's theology, at least, must be regarded as supporting those who have accepted the synthetic view of N.T. eschatology. His infancy narrative stresses the sense of eschatological fulfilment. The new age is most certainly present. This can be expressed in the terminology of the Kingdom itself (Lk.1.32 - 33) or in various other typically eschatological concepts; the use of the decisive '*this day*' (2.11), the idea of the Lord coming to his temple (2.22 - 27), the theophanic revelation of God (2.9), the coming of the '*dayspring*' (1.78), the deliverance of God's people from their enemies (1.74), the presence of salvation (1.47,68,77; 2.11,30), the repeated experience of eschatological joy (1.14,46-47,98 2.10.20,38), and above all the presence of the Messianic Child.<sup>37</sup> Any attempt to construe Luke's eschatology as entirely future completely founders on the exegesis of the infancy narratives. Furthermore, as Minear has pointed out, Conzelmann's entire scheme falls apart as a result of the exegesis of the infancy narratives. It is simply impossible to view these chapters as constituting part of the epoch of Israel, to the exclusion of the new age.

Having said this, however, we must go on to stress Ellis' terminology of continuity and discontinuity. The Lucan infancy narrative is set within the context of the old Israel and the old age.<sup>38</sup> The situation around the birth of Christ therefore has definite continuity with the old Israel. Further, while the new age has definitely arrived, it has not yet arrived in its fulness. The dawn has not yet changed into the fulness of day. The infancy narrative bears witness to a transitionary period.<sup>39</sup> The old and the new age are held together in tension. Fulfilment is present. Consummation is yet to come. Even the fulfilment is preparatory. The eschatology of the Lucan infancy narrative therefore supports the broader eschatological understanding of

Ladd, and conflicts with the concept first suggested by Weiss. Ladd's understanding of 'fulfilment' without 'consummation' is supported by the delicate balance which Luke holds between the old and the new.<sup>40</sup> Weiss' contention that '*Either the basileia is here, or it is not yet here*', is denied.<sup>41</sup> Luke's theology denies that the Kingdom must come exhaustively and suddenly or not at all. It can be inaugurated in stages.

Those who hold that Luke has diluted the eschatological elements from the tradition, usually come to this conclusion from a comparison of Luke with Q, Mark and Matthew. If it is not possible to substantiate this understanding of Lucan theology, then it is even more difficult to substantiate a purely futuristic understanding of Matthean theology. This is again particularly clear from the Matthean infancy narrative. The emphasis on eschatological fulfilment is as marked in Matthew's narrative. If anything it is more explicit, due to the fulfilment formula. The genealogy sees the entire course of Israel's history finding its fulfilment in the birth of Jesus. In fact both from the genealogy, and from the journey to and return from Egypt, the history of Israel is recapitulated in the personal history of a particular child.<sup>42</sup> The Davidic king is present. The coming of Emmanuel fulfils the expectation of the latter half of Isaiah, there are angelic revelations, the eschatological expectation of the nations coming to Jerusalem is fulfilled in the Magi, the new Exodus takes place in the history of the Messianic Child, and to make the whole matter quite explicit, the universal Messianic fulfilment is particularised and concretised in the geographical location of the fulfilment events.<sup>43</sup>

The study of the Matthean infancy narrative therefore leads us to reverse the common understanding of Luke's theology in comparison with the remainder of the N.T. Luke is usually credited with transforming eschatology into salvation-history. But if anything it is Matthew who has a concept of salvation-history. His infancy narrative emphasises the idea that history is planned and controlled by the divine will. This is evident from the threat and grace theme in the genealogy and the threat and protection theme in the remainder of the narrative.<sup>44</sup> History is viewed as a process that is guided towards an eschatological fulfilment. This moves in a linear process. There is the linear process of Israel's history (the genealogy) followed by the linear process of the Messianic Child's history (the remainder of the infancy narrative). This means that Matthew's infancy narrative supports Cullmann's view that salvation-history is fundamental to the N.T. in general rather than to Luke in particular. It is of course true that the infancy narratives express the theology of the two evangelists rather than that of the historical Jesus, since they describe a period before his ministry. However, it should also be remembered that the more widely the synthetic view



of eschatology and the salvation-historical view of time is found in the N.T. documents, the less likely it becomes that the '*consistent eschatology*' or '*realised eschatology*' views are correct.

3. Thirdly, our examination of the eschatology of the infancy narratives leads us to re-locate the position that the infancy narratives should take in the development of early church tradition. The usual locality or *Sitz im Leben* postulated for the infancy narratives is later than the main body of the synoptic tradition, later than Pauline theology, and either immediately before, simultaneously with, or after the development of Johannine theology. For instance, Paul Lobstein believed that the infancy narratives express a popular Christological development ( the physiological understanding of Messiahship ) which arose either simultaneously with or after the intellectual Christology expresses in the metaphysical understanding of Messiahship (Jn. 1.1-18). This development followed in the second generation, after the original theocratic understanding of Messiahship.<sup>45</sup> Dibelius explained the '*Christian*' sections of the Lucan narrative as a theologumenon that arose in the Hellenistic stage of the development of early church tradition.<sup>46</sup> Dibelius was following Bultmann.<sup>47</sup> Von Campenhausen advocates the view that the infancy-tradition (particularly the virginal conception) arose in the area of Syrian Antioch just before the time of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch.<sup>48</sup> Raymond Brown advocates the idea of a two and three stage Christology. In the development of early church tradition the moment of the revelation of Christ's Sonship was pushed back from the resurrection, to the baptism, then the birth of Christ and finally into his pre-existence.<sup>49</sup> In his view the infancy tradition is therefore later than the synoptic tradition and earlier than the Johannine tradition.

On the other hand various scholars have repeatedly discovered elements in the infancy narratives which have led them to locate the narratives early in the development of the tradition. Gore noted that Luke's narrative

*breathes the spirit of the Messianic hope before it had received the rude and crushing blow involved in the rejection of the Messiah.*<sup>50</sup>

Harnack cautioned against the view that the Matthean narrative developed late. He similarly noted that the '*whole narrative breathes of Palestine*'.<sup>51</sup> Both Orr and Machen emphasised the primitive elements in the Lucan narrative, and Winter has argued for the early Palestinian character of Luke's narrative.<sup>52</sup>

Our examination supports the latter scholarly consensus. The eschatology of the infancy narratives is of the same type as the eschatology of the synoptic tradition. The age to come has entered into this age in the Person of Jesus. There is fulfilment without consummation. The eschatological fulfilment is seen on a purely '*horizontal*' or linear plane rather than on a '*vertical and horizontal*' plane as in Raymond Brown's understanding of Johannine eschatology.<sup>53</sup> The eschatology of the infancy narratives is certainly as primitive as the synoptic tradition and probably earlier than the Johannine tradition.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the eschatological elements in the infancy narratives are not simply to be found here and there. The narratives are thoroughly eschatological. If the eschatological elements were removed, the narratives would disintegrate. It is therefore impossible to conceive of these narratives as ever existing without a thoroughly eschatological content or to conceive of the narratives being considerably changed after the origin of the eschatological part of the tradition. The *Sitz im Leben* of the infancy narratives must therefore be the early Palestinian community. This conclusion is essentially the same as the one we came to about the prophetic *Sitz im Leben* of the infancy narratives. Both lines of investigation point to the same situation. This should decisively repudiate all attempts to explain the infancy narratives in terms of the influence of pagan or Hellenistic ideas, or in terms of an extended theologoumenal process.

## CHRISTOLOGY

1. If it can be said that, according to the infancy narratives, eschatology can only be understood prophetically, then it can equally be said that according to these narratives, Christology can only be understood eschatologically. The words of Rudolph Otto can be used as a fitting description of the Christology of the infancy narratives; *'It is not Jesus who brings the Kingdom...the Kingdom brings him with it.'*<sup>55</sup> Our perspective is of course different from that of Otto. Our exegetical study as well as our structural analysis has shown that the infancy narratives describe firstly the coming of the new age, and secondly the centering of that new age in the Messianic Child.<sup>56</sup> In the structural analysis the old age - new age polarity is always the background from which the Christological announcement is made. The study of the various Christological titles has shown that they are understood firstly as the saving action of God in the eschatological event, and secondly as the revelation of that action in the Messianic Child.<sup>57</sup> Eschatology is therefore the basis of Christology. This is an emphasis which appears in a unique sense in the infancy narratives because only here do we have the record of Christ as a baby or child, that is, as one who is

almost totally passive. The new age represents the actual activity of God, whereas in the ministry of Jesus it is the activity of Jesus that represents the activity of God. In this the infancy narratives have a vital contribution to make to the study of N.T. Christology. They pose the question of whether we should approach the remainder of the N.T. with the same conception. They suggest that we should seek to understand his preaching, his claims, his self-consciousness and his actions, from a consistently eschatological perspective.<sup>58</sup> If this is done it may well produce some radical changes in Christological understanding. A similar point has recently been made by G.R. Beasley-Murray. His remarks are so much in line with our own thesis that we shall quote him extensively. He notes that;

*some of the most characteristic sayings of Jesus about the kingdom of God indicate that in his deeds, in his person, and in his works the kingdom is in action and so present among men.*

This is the most distinctive element in the teaching of Jesus ( Matt.11.5,12; 12.28; Lk.17.27);

*And this otherwise unheard of teaching is present in all four gospels, not simply the first three. It is expressed in such astonishing ways in the passages quoted above; it is asking us to believe the incredible that such highly original teaching, which is of a piece with the rest of the instruction of Jesus, was impossible for Jesus, but his followers had the ingenuity to frame it themselves. In reality the unique relation of Jesus to the kingdom of God is a datum of the teaching of Jesus accepted as authentic by virtually all gospel critics. But the question forces itself upon us: Who is he, in and through whom the kingdom of God appears? Those among Israel who kept the hope of the kingdom alive called such a one the Messiah. If that is a limited term for the Jesus of the gospels, in view of its current interpretation among his contemporaries, at least no lesser name for him will do. In the teaching attributed to him in the gospels that name is qualified with concepts like Son of Man, Servant of the Lord and even Lord (i.e. Lord of David and of all men, Mk.12:37). Given the teaching of Jesus on the kingdom of God it is comprehensible that he should have modified current messianic doctrine by these concepts, and it is more plausible to set those modifications to his account than to Mark or to unknown prophets before Mark.<sup>59</sup>*

We agree with Beasley-Murray and add that the 'low Christological self-consciousness' view of Jesus is the result of an attempt to understand Christology in abstraction from eschatology. As soon as the eschatological claims of Jesus are properly understood his personal claims must be equally understood. It is also evident that a futuris-

tic view of Jesus' eschatology will tend to produce the idea of a low Christological self-consciousness for Jesus. If the Kingdom was entirely future then Jesus could not have identified himself with the Kingdom. Similarly a strong emphasis on realised eschatology can lead to the dilution of the cosmic elements in the coming of the parousia. As with the liberal lives of Jesus the Kingdom becomes a symbol of eternal spiritual and ethical values and loses its ultimate proportions. Consequently Jesus can be viewed as one with a low Christological self-consciousness. But when the cosmic nature of the parousia is understood, and when the link between that event and the present activity of Jesus is perceived in the teaching of Jesus, one is forced to accept a high Christological or Messianic self-consciousness for Jesus. It is therefore vital that Christology should be understood from the perspective of eschatology. Eschatology must be the basis of Christology. The infancy narratives are a section of the N.T. that can make this point in a unique way.

2. The priority of eschatology over Christology in the infancy narratives leads to an important corollary in terms of the relationship between the infancy tradition and the Logos Christology of the fourth gospel. It is common to see these two traditions as being antithetical. Wolfhart Pannenberg expresses the views of many scholars when he says;

*the contrast between the idea of the Son's pre-existence and the explanation of the divine Sonship by means of the virgin birth is much sharper...it is irreconcilable with this that the divine Sonship as such was first established in time. Sonship cannot at the same time consist in pre-existence and still have its origin only in the divine procreation of Jesus in Mary.<sup>60</sup>*

We suggest that such an antithesis is only possible when the infancy narratives are understood as representing an ontological view of the virginal conception. This is the common view of the infancy narratives because they have been traditionally approached from a purely dogmatic perspective. The articles of the creed have usually prompted the questions that are put to the text.<sup>61</sup> Since the creeds are the result of the welding of the N.T. witness to Greek philosophical conceptions the articles of the Nicene and Apostles creeds are stated in ontological thought forms. It is not surprising therefore that the infancy narratives have been understood by conservative theologians as supporting those articles in the creed which profess faith in the Incarnation. Indeed, the articles of the creed do have their historical origin in the infancy tradition. The virginal conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit has therefore been

taken to mean that the ontological relationship between the Father and the Son was somehow determined by the event of the virginal conception. With such assumptions the remark of Pannenberg makes a great deal of sense. How can the ontological relationship between the Father and the Son be in any way determined by the virginal conception if the Son had already pre-existed as the eternal logos? But our exegesis has shown that the infancy narratives do not operate with ontological conceptions at all. The entire system of thinking is Jewish, Old Testamental and eschatological. Eschatological categories may have ontological implications, but they are not in themselves ontological. The virginal conception is firstly not a central element in the infancy narratives, and secondly expresses the belief that the coming of this child is part of the eschatological action of God. The virginal conception is the result of the linear process of salvation-history. The promise and eschatological fulfilment process culminates in the birth of a particular Messianic child and so his birth is thoroughly the act of God. God is invading the plane of human history. His ultimate reign over all things is breaking into the present. He therefore even breaks into the normal process of human pro-creation and asserts his act. This is all that the virginal conception signifies in the context of the infancy narratives. There is no suggestion that the Son only became the Son at this point. Ontological categories have to be imported into the narrative before they can be found there. Further, to assert that the virginal conception is part of the promise-fulfilment process of redemptive history is to assert that prior to the eschatological action of God in this child there were the actions of God in the process of redemptive history. God's saving actions were displayed repeatedly in redemptive history. Now in his final act of redemptive history this child is born as the act of God himself. The activity of God therefore pre-existed this particular act of God. But in biblical thinking the activity of God is almost synonymous with the word of God. God's word is his deed. John asserts that the word of God pre-existed the word that God spoke in Jesus Christ. The same idea is expressed by the writer to the Hebrews (Heb.1.1-3). The infancy tradition and the Logos Christology are therefore two different ways of saying essentially the same thing. But this can only be understood if the infancy tradition and the virginal conception is understood eschatologically. It is unfortunate that Pannenberg, of all people, should hold to the antithesis between the two traditions, because it is particularly in his theology that Christology is founded on eschatology.

3. By the same token the priority of eschatology over Christology in the infancy narratives establishes the divinity of Christ. As the exegesis has shown, the eschatological activity of God is so closely identified with this particular child that it becomes possible to say that in the coming of this child, God himself has come. God is with us,

Emmanuel! Johannine terminology expresses this in terms of the word of God being so fully and perfectly revealed in the person of Jesus Christ that it becomes possible to say that Jesus is the word of God, and therefore Jesus is God. The infancy narratives make the same affirmation but in eschatological terms. They assert the full divinity of Christ in a number of ways. The name Saviour in Matt.1.27 is the result of the association of the Lord (*κυριος*) as Saviour with Jesus Christ as Saviour.<sup>62</sup> Similarly the title '*Emmanuel*' indicates that God himself has come in Jesus Christ.<sup>63</sup> In Luke's infancy narrative the use of *κυριος* for Jesus identifies him with the *κυριος* of the Septuagint.<sup>64</sup> The Lucan use of '*Son of God*' also alludes to more than a merely adoptive sonship.<sup>65</sup> The Lucan use of '*Saviour*' also identifies Jesus with God as Saviour.<sup>66</sup> Finally, the coming of Elijah before the Lord (Lk.1. 16-17) and the coming of the Lord to his temple (Lk.2.22 and Mal.3.1) may both allude to the identification of Jesus with the *κυριος* of the O.T. All these affirmations of the divinity of Christ are given in a thoroughly eschatological context. Thus, far from diluting the uniqueness of Jesus, the priority of eschatology over Christology actually established his uniqueness and his divinity. Again the infancy narratives make a contribution to the study of Christology in the N.T. documents in general. They suggest that the various titles of Jesus should be studied in the context of N.T. eschatology rather than in terms of their genetic development. This is a case where synchronic analysis must take priority over diachronic analysis. The vast amount of literature on the '*Son of Man*', its origins and developments, is in many ways irrelevant. What is vital to understand is the meaning of '*Son of Man*' in the context of N.T. eschatology. What is more, the diachronic study of such titles can even be misleading. It can give a connotation to the particular term which is either far more complex, or far weaker, than the connotation of the term or title in the context of N.T. eschatology.

4. The infancy narratives place Christology in a framework of eschatology and prophetic exhortation. Christology springs from eschatology and therefore moves towards the challenge of existential decision. This challenge becomes the basis of prophetic exhortation. The Christological revelation or announcement is never presented in the infancy narratives without the dynamic of challenge and response. Christology is not viewed either academically or purely historically. Jesus Christ is not viewed as a person in isolation from the challenge which his coming produces for every individual. Again the infancy narratives have a contribution to make. They suggest that Christology should never be studied as an object. Jesus Christ can never become a mere object of study. For the N.T. writers that is an impossibility. He can only be thought of at all in terms of the decision that is brought to bear on the subject. This is not because he lacks objectivity, but because his objectivity is so dynamic. He is truly

and objectively eschatological. He is the coming of God's Kingdom. Therefore men must repent and believe, or rebel and refuse to believe. They must behave like Mary and Joseph, or like Herod and the scribes. Much the same point is made by R. Maddox;

*It is noteworthy that, in contrast with some apocalypses in the Jewish tradition, Jesus never describes the Kingdom of God, which is fundamental to his message in substantive terms. Instead, he speaks of the spiritual dynamics that are relevant to the Kingdom. Jesus' speech about the Kingdom is largely in the form of parables, which require for an appropriate response not so much sober logic as imaginative, personal involvement in the image.<sup>66</sup>*

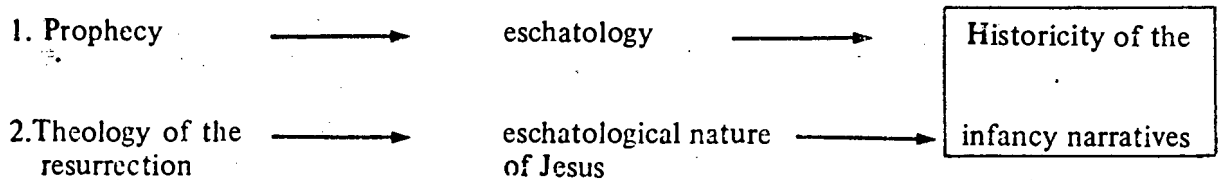
It is at this point that the contribution of the infancy narratives is in essential agreement with the existential understanding of the N.T. The only problem is that existential views usually go hand in hand with a negative attitude towards historicity. This is unfortunate. The emphasis on encounter, personal decision and response in existential hermeneutics is openly supported by the way in which Christology is presented in the infancy narratives.

## HISTORY

If it is true to say that eschatology can only be understood prophetically, and that Christology can only be properly understood eschatologically, it is equally true to say that according to the infancy narratives, history can also only be understood prophetically and eschatologically. The acceptance of the historicity of the events narrated depends upon the acceptance of a prophetic and eschatological world view. More precisely, the historicity of the stories that are told in the infancy narratives stands or falls on the eschatological value of the person of Jesus Christ. If the age to come did break into this age in Jesus of Nazareth then one can approach the historicity of the infancy narratives from a new perspective. In our critical-historical examination of the infancy narratives we concluded that the verdict of non-historicity is not proven.<sup>67</sup> We did not feel that this rather non-committal conclusion could be taken further on a purely historical-critical level. We are now in a position to take this question further. For the traditional conservative scholar the conclusion we have come to can be taken further by a reliance on the doctrine of inspiration. The conservative scholar can positively accept the historicity of the infancy narratives because he believes that the inspiration of scripture can be intelligently affirmed, provided there are no compelling historical reasons to disprove it. But such a position has

the drawback of being utterly unconvincing for the scholar who does not accept the same view of inspiration. We must therefore investigate the possibility of making a more positive affirmation about the historicity of the infancy narratives on the basis of biblical theology.

Two lines of thought converge at this point. Firstly, the historicity of the events depends upon approaching the narratives from the perspective of prophecy and eschatology. Secondly, the historicity of the events depends upon approaching the narratives from the perspective of the eschatological nature of Jesus Christ. This in turn must be based upon a theology of the resurrection. Our line of argument can be portrayed as follows:



1. The prophetic-eschatological view of history may be defined as follows. History is the arena of God's redemptive plan for mankind. The O.T. bears witness to the saving acts of God in the history of Israel. Out of this history arose the prophetic hope, which may be defined as the expectation of the day of the Lord, or the final coming of God into human history, the eschaton. The idea of promise and fulfilment and the successive revelation of the activity of God in human history gave rise to the understanding of history as a process governed and administered by God towards a certain goal, that is, along a linear process.

For many modern scholars such a view of history is totally unacceptable. The modern Western view of history is to be preferred. But there is a real question as to whether the modern 'Western' view of history is able to stand without the assumption of the biblical, prophetic view of history. According to Pannenberg;

*Today there is a widespread consent to the view that the specific consciousness of universal history has its origins in the Jewish and Christian theology of history.<sup>6 8</sup>*

Pannenberg questions whether it is really possible to think intelligently about history at all without this consciousness. Montgomery makes a similar point;

*Concern for history is not a universal human characteristic. We of the West find historical thinking so natural to us that we often assume*



*that all men in all times and places likewise have thought in historical terms. In actual fact, it is the twin heritage of Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian cultures that has given the West its historical orientation.<sup>69</sup>*

Since the Judeo-Christian view of history is essentially the prophetic and eschatological view of history, it is not unhistorical to accept the perspective of the infancy narratives. If there is such a thing as promise and fulfilment in history, if there is such a thing as a redemptive plan in history, then the perspective of the infancy narratives is not illegitimate. The way in which the community of early Christian prophets 'read' the events, or traditions, which they received is of course rather different in detail from the way in which modern men are accustomed to think. Elements such as the star moving from Jerusalem to Bethlehem may be the reflection of a view of things that is rather different from the modern understanding. But that the age to come can break through into this age, that God can reveal himself to men, that certain events can be 'fulfilled' events, is not outside the limits of proper historical method.

As Ellis has shown, the Pauline community and the co-workers of the Pauline mission believed that a pneumatic insight was essential to the proper understanding of God's plan of redemption (1 Cor.2.1-16; Eph.3.1-6).<sup>70</sup> If there is a real connection between the authorship of the fourth gospel and the apocalypse then we have another link between a prophetic-eschatological or even apocalyptic view of history (apocalypse) and the way in which the historical tradition about Jesus was handled (the gospel). If this biblical understanding of history is accepted, then the historicity of the infancy narratives can be viewed positively. If it is not accepted, then it is not possible to accept the historicity of the tradition in any sense, because events that take place in the eschatological realm saturate both infancy narratives.

2. The infancy narratives have certain links with the resurrection narratives. More significantly the identity of Jesus Christ is vitally linked to the resurrection. In the third chapter some attention was given to the *New Theology of the Resurrection*.<sup>71</sup> If that theology of history, and the historicity of the resurrection, is accepted, following this theology the identity of Jesus Christ as an eschatological reality can be accepted. As Montgomery and Pannenberg have shown, the pre-Easter claims of Jesus are vindicated by the resurrection. But the resurrection must be viewed as an eschatological event. Consequently the whole identity of Jesus receives an eschatological value. It becomes possible to say that the Kingdom of God did come in him. Once this has been accepted the infancy narratives can be approached from a new perspective. If the Kingdom of God came, in some sense, in his life, ministry, death and

resurrection, then it is obvious to expect that his birth was associated with phenomena that can only be understood as having taken place in the eschatological realm.

3. With this perspective in mind we can now reassess the historicity of the infancy narratives. The events which these narratives describe are basically a witness to eschatological phenomena. The revival of the prophetic gift, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (embracing the virginal conception), revelatory phenomena, and the experience of the joy of salvation are all signs that the age to come began to make itself felt right from the birth of Jesus Christ. The basic historical claim of these narratives is that during this period and amongst a certain group of believing Jews, there came a renewed experience of the prophetic spirit. Various individuals received the prophetic gift, and consequently experienced phenomena that are normally associated with this gift. Revelations, or numinous experiences occurred, divine guidance and intervention was experienced in an unusual intensity, and those who experienced these phenomena also experienced a profound sense of joy and worship. All these events were in some way associated with the birth and infancy of the child who later became the central figure in the gospel narratives. The question now is, can this historical claim be accepted?

A number of factors lead us to answer this in the affirmative.

1. According to Massingberde Ford there is evidence of an enthusiastic prophetic movement amongst the Zealots during this period. There are numerous links with the Zealot movement in the language of the Lucan infancy narrative. This leads her to conclude that the events narrated in the Lucan narrative, *'should be placed against the background of enthusiastic Zealot expectation occurring especially around the time of the death of Herod (4 B.C.) onwards'*.<sup>72</sup> This means that the historical Sitz im Leben fits the stories told in these narratives.
2. Both infancy narratives have prophetic characteristics which show that they were transmitted and brought substantially to their present shape by a group of early Christian prophets. This places their transmissional Sitz im Leben early in the development of primitive Christianity. It also makes sense that events which were experienced initially in terms of the prophetic gift should be remembered and passed on by others who had received the same prophetic gift.
3. Both infancy narratives contain an eschatology which cannot be later than the early development of the synoptic tradition. This means that the narratives cannot be the end result of a long theologoumenal process in the Hellenistic

Christian community. Numerous elements in the narratives studied by Paul Winter, C.T. Davis and others support a location of these narratives in the Palestinian Christian community.<sup>73</sup>

4. Points 3.2 and 3.3 above mean that it is most probable that the traditions which are reflected in the narratives arose in the socio-cultural environment in which the family of Jesus lived. If the earlier dating of Matthew and Luke advocated by J.A.T. Robinson is accepted this probability is greatly strengthened.<sup>74</sup> This again removes the acceptability of the theologoumenal hypothesis.
5. The historicity of the infancy narratives is usually denied in modern scholarship due to the midrashic form of exegesis that is found in them. But all the evidence indicates that the Christian form of midrashic exegesis went from the event to the O.T. text and not vice versa.<sup>75</sup> Further, the use of midrashic methods in the infancy narratives must be distinguished from the extensive use of midrashic ideas by certain modern interpreters of the infancy narratives.<sup>76</sup>
6. While certain internal problems exist in the relationship between the two infancy narratives, they are by no means as serious as is often suggested, and the essential agreement of the two narratives on a number of points means that these difficulties are not enough to impugn the historicity of the narratives.<sup>77</sup>
7. A number of elements in the narratives fit well into the historical environment of the day, for instance, the character of Herod, the rule of Archelaus, the portrayal of the Magi, the fête at John the Baptist's circumcision, and the temple rituals.<sup>78</sup> In view of the points given above (1-4) the concept of verisimilitude does not explain these characteristics.<sup>79</sup>

We conclude that given the prophetic-eschatological view of history, and given the eschatological nature of Christ's identity, the historicity of the infancy narratives can be accepted by the biblical interpreter. We should add that the biblical interpreter can accept this conclusion, not by defining history in two ways (*Historie* and *Geschichte*), but by adopting a certain philosophy of history. His acceptance of this conclusion does not therefore involve a dualistic definition of history as much as a Christian commitment as an historian and biblical interpreter. Instead of dividing history into two categories the Christian interpreter separates himself, in his particular philosophy of history, from other interpreters and their philosophy of history.

Finally, the prophetic nature of these narratives and the particular way in which their

Christology is presented is designed to affect the reader or interpreter in a certain way. The investigation of Christology in the infancy narratives leads the investigator, ultimately, to adopt a certain stance towards the coming of Christ. Being aware of the semic dimension in the portrayal of the principal figures, he is driven to choose his own representative. He must choose Herod or Joseph, the scribes or the Magi, Zechariah or Mary. In choosing the latter, and with them the shepherds, Simeon and Anna, he must choose Christ. If he does, and if he can follow the prophetic and eschatological view of history, he will be led afresh to the discovery that in choosing Christ the age to come has made its way into his own existence.



## NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

1. Karl Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, Wolfhart Pannenberg, The Apostles Creed.
2. Louis Berkhoff, Systematic Theology.
3. Ethelbert Stauffer, New Testament Theology, p 108f., Oscar Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament.
4. Reginald H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Christology.
5. D.M. Baillie, God was in Christ., Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol.1, Part 2, Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time.
6. Johannes Weiss, Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus.
7. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus, God and Man.
8. George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament.
9. A 'systems' approach to texts is discussed in connection with the work of Paul Ricoeur by McKnight, Meaning in Texts, the Historical Shaping of a Narrative Hermeneutics, p 205-215. Our approach to the text is similar to that of Laurentin in his Structure et Theologie de Luc 1-11, p 7-8.
10. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, op.cit., 'The Miracle of Christmas', p 172-202. See also the comment by Laurentin, Structure, op.cit., p 11.
11. James Orr, The Virgin Birth of Christ, J. Gresham Machen, The Virgin Birth of Christ, Douglas Edwards, The Virgin Birth in History and Faith, Thomas Boslooper, The Virgin Birth, Hans von Campenhausen, The Virgin Birth in the Theology of the Ancient Church, Raymond E. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah.



## NOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

1. Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, op.cit., p 14 states the importance of these factors in modern N.T. research. For the general background of thought reference can be made to Karl Barth, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century, Its History and Background; W.G. Kümmel, The New Testament, The History of the Investigation of Its Problems; H.D. MacDonald, Ideas of Revelation; Theories of Revelation; Stephen Neill, The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961; Alec R. Vidler, The Church in an Age of Revolution, 1789 to the Present Day.
2. Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus.
3. Herman Samuel Reimarus, Fragments, p 138-215.
4. Reimarus, op.cit., p 230-235.
5. Thomas Paine, The Age of Reason, p 12.
6. Paine, op.cit., p 10-11.
7. David F. Strauss, The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined, p 126-140, 181-184.
8. Strauss, op.cit., p 59-63.
9. Strauss, op.cit., p 108-118.
10. Paul Lobstein, The Virgin Birth of Christ, p 33.
11. Lobstein, op.cit., p 72-76.
12. Lobstein, op.cit., p 79-111.
13. Lobstein, op.cit., p 108.
14. See Thomas Boslooper, The Virgin Birth, p 83-117, especially p 87, 113. Boslooper has given a thorough chronological survey of the investigation of the infancy narratives and it is not necessary for us to repeat his work.
15. Boslooper, op.cit., p 113.
16. Other conservative works during this period were by A.M. Fairbairn and L.M. Sweet ( Boslooper, op.cit., p 115-116) and mention should be made of the contribution of Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah; Sir William Ramsay, Was Christ Born at Bethlehem; and the Swiss N.T. scholar Frederic Godet, A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke.
17. Apart from the works already mentioned one will notice the number of books and articles on the virgin birth and infancy narratives during this period noted by Boslooper; A. Nebe, 1893; A. Resch, 1897; E.A. Budge, 1899; W. Soltau, 1903; R.J. Knowling, 1904; R.H. Grützmacher, 1906; T.J. Thorburn, 1908; E. Petersen, 1909; D. Volter, 1911; G.H. Box, 1916; V. Taylor, 1920; C.B. Moss, 1923; F. Palmer, 1924; J.R. Straton, 1924; T.F. Royds, 1925; p 239-259.





18. J. Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, Emil Brunner, *The Mediator*, Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol 1, Part 2, Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Adolf Harnack, *Luke the Physician; The Date of Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels*. Harnack reflects an earlier period.
19. Brunner, *op.cit.*, p 322.
20. Brunner, *op.cit.*, p 325.
21. Charles Gore, *Dissertation on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation*, p 41-54.
22. Charles Augustus Briggs, *'The Virgin Birth of our Lord'*, p 202.
23. Briggs, *op.cit.*, p 205.
24. Gore, *op.cit.*, p 66.
25. Briggs, *op.cit.*, p 207.
26. James Orr, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, p 196.
27. Orr, *op.cit.*, p 185-187, 216.
28. Douglas Edwards, *The Virgin Birth in History and Faith*, p 105-114.
29. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, *op.cit.*, p 183.
30. Barth, *op.cit.*, p 183.
31. Barth, *op.cit.*, p 184.
32. Barth, *op.cit.*, p 202.
33. Barth, *op.cit.*, p 118-202.
34. Barth, *op.cit.*, p 184-186.
35. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 282-284.
36. Strauss, *op.cit.*, p 108-118.
37. Strauss, *op.cit.*, p 119-151.
38. Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, p 36, 35.
39.
  1. Jesus was born in the last days of Herod's reign (Matt.2:1-13 and Lk.1:5).
  2. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18, 20 and Lk. 1:35).
  3. His mother was a virgin (Matt. 1:18,20,23 and Lk.1:27,34).
  4. She was betrothed to Joseph (Matt.1:18 and Lk.1:27,2:5).

5. He was of the lineage of David (Matt. 1:16, 20 and Lk. 1:27, 2:4).
  6. Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1 and Lk. 2:4,6).
  7. By divine direction he was called Jesus (Matt. 1:27 and Lk. 2:11).
  8. He was declared to be a Saviour (Matt. 1:27 and Lk. 2:11).
  9. Joseph knew beforehand both the fact and cause of Mary's condition (Matt. 1:18-20 and Luke 2:5).
  10. He nevertheless took Mary as his wife and became the legal father of Jesus (Matt. 1:20, 24, 25 and Lk. 2:5 ff).
  11. The birth was attested by revelations and visions (Matt. 1:20 and Lk. 1:27-28).
  12. After the birth the family dwelt in Nazareth (Matt. 2:13; Lk. 2:39) *Orr op. cit.* (p 36-37).
40. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 188-209.
  41. Ernst Nellesen, *Das Kind und Seine Mutter, Struktur und Verkündigung des 2 Kapitels im Matthäusevangelium*, p 17-21.
  42. Barth, *op.cit.*, p 176.
  43. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus, God and Man*.
  44. See below in this section under John, and the issue raised by Vincent Taylor.
  45. As in Lobstein, *op.cit.*, in the early period, or for instance Brown, *Birth*, *op.cit.*, in recent scholarship.
  46. Vincent Taylor, *The Historical Evidence for the Virgin Birth*, p 1-6; Edwards, *op.cit.*, p 48.
  47. Hans von Campenhausen, *The Virgin Birth in the Theology of the Ancient Church*, p 15-16.
  48. Edwards, *op.cit.*, p 30-43.
  49. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p 1-6, Edwards, *op.cit.*, p 74-76.
  50. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p 6.
  51. Edwards, *op.cit.*, p 73.
  52. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p 9.
  53. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p 12-20.
  54. Edwards, *op.cit.*, p 130-140.
  55. Edwards, *op.cit.*, p 141-142.
  56. This hypothesis is not popular today. It probably arose at this stage for two reasons. Firstly, the idea that the virgin birth entered into the tradition from pagan sources tended to be suggested during the period of Strauss's influence. Once the concept of midrash began to be understood the pagan source theory tended to wane. The beginnings of midrashic theory can be seen with G.H.Box, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, 1916, although it took a while for this theory to gain

strength. Before midrash was understood it was natural to suggest that the early Palestinian tradition was added to by a Hellenistic mythological idea, but once the extent of Jewish folk-lore and midrashic speculation became apparent it was unnecessary to look to pagan sources. Secondly this hypothesis was acceptable while a sharp contrast was drawn between the early Palestinian and Hellenistic Christian communities. More recent scholarship has tended to blur this distinction as the early mixing of Jewish and Hellenistic ideas in Palestine has been understood.

57. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p 24.
58. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p 24-36.
59. The former must rely upon conjecture and the latter fails to commend itself because the Hebrew participle can equally well be translated as a future tense.
60. Box points out against this that a natural birth (in 1.30-33) does not need the special sign of a supernatural birth (1.36-37). Taylor replies that 1.30-33 is natural but speaks of the birth of a remarkable son.
61. Mary's question implies an immediate conception. But no such immediate conception is declared in the previous passage.
62. Verse 35 describes a virgin birth, something no Jew would have readily believed. Verse 36-37 describes a miracle yet one which would be familiar to a Jewish mind. *Mary is bidden to accept as the divine promise what is so remarkable as to be otherwise unknown to her on the ground of what is certainly remarkable but familiar to her mind and outlook* (p 42). Taylor feels this is a strange argument.
63. This should not be pressed, but there does seem to be a difference in that verse 32 refers to a purely Messianic title whereas verse 35 seems to include a Sonship of *'actual origin'*.
64. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p 47.
65. However he maintains that recent research has shown that the text of the N.T. was rather freely handled in the second century. It may be possible that interpolations have crept in which are not reflected in variant manuscripts. If this is granted can this particular interpolation be regarded as typical in any sense? Taylor discusses the various types of interpolation which are known to us from textual variants. He concludes: *'the presence of textual variations is an almost necessary condition in the case of doctrinal insertions'*, and *'the theory that doctrinal insertions may exist when the exact text shows no break, is improbable in the extreme'* (p 73).  
  
This makes it extremely unlikely that Lk.1.34-35 could have entered the text by interpolation without this being reflected in the manuscript evidence.
66. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p 69.

67. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, op.cit., p 129-131.

68. *In both accounts we find:*

1. an appearance of the angel Gabriel (Lk. 1.11, 28).
2. fear on the part of the person to whom the annunciation is to be made (Lk.1.12 and 29)
3. reassurance by the angel and the pronouncement of a promise Lk.1.13-17 and 30-33)
4. a perplexed question by the recipient of the promise (Lk.1.18a and 34a)
5. a grounding of the question in a causal clause (Lk.1.18b and 34b)
6. reiteration of the promise with reference to something which in both cases is in the nature of a sign (Lk.1.19-20 and 35-38): Machen, *Virgin Birth* op.cit., (p 152-153).

69. The earlier interest in the linguistic origins of Lk. 1-2 must be seen against the background of the Synoptic problem, with its interest in the various sources. See Stephen Neill, op.cit., p 105-136. The re-emergence of this issue in more recent research is probably due mainly to the interest of Paul Winter in the Jewish origins of the N.T. and the various reactions to his views. Prior to Winter the failure of the Hebrew and Aramaic source theory of Synoptic origins tended to suppress the Hebraic source theory of Lk. 1-2.

70. R. McL. Wilson, *'Some Recent Studies in the Lucan Infancy Narrative'*, p 251.

71. Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, op.cit.

Here the clearest example will be given.  
Lk. 1:5-15

- |      |                    |  |
|------|--------------------|--|
| 5.   | εγενετο εν         | 'St. Luke, and he only presents this construction about a dozen times in the gospel and The Acts' (p97). |
| 6.   | εναντιον, εναντι   | only in Luke   |
| 7.   | καθοτι             | only in Luke   |
| 8-9. | κατα το ειωθος     | only in Luke   |
|      | κατα το ειθισμενον | only in Luke   |
| 10.  | ην προσευχομενον   | 'a favourite construction with Luke.'  |
|      | πληθος             | Luke 25 times<br>Matt twice<br>John twice  |
| 11.  | ωφθη               | Luke 13 times<br>Matthew once<br>Mark once   |

13. μη φοβου Luke 7 times  
Mark once  
Διωτι only in Luke
14. αγαλλιασις Luke twice, elsewhere wanting in other gospels
15. ενωπιον Luke 36 times  
John once  
πνευματος αγιου  
πλησθησεται  
πνευμα αγιου is exclusively Lucan  
for instance, in 53 cases in Luke, rare elsewhere ( p 97-101).

## Lk. 1:39-56

39. ανισταναι Luke a few dozen cases, Matt. 2, Mk. 4 times.  
εν ταις ημεραις  
ταυταις Luke 12 cases, wanting in the other gospels.
41. ως in this construction in Luke 48 times, wanting in Matt.  
εσκιρτησεν and Mk.  
only in Luke in the N.T.
42. κραυγη μεγαλη only in Luke in the N.T.
44. ιδου γαρ Luke 6 times, not found in the other gospels.  
εγενετο η φωνη Luke 7 cases, not in the other gospels.
- 46-47. αγαλλιασις and cognates in Luke 7 cases, Matt. 1, Jn. 2.  
Matt. once  
Jn. twice
48. επιβλεπειν επι only in Lk. in N.T.  
ιδου γαρ see on verse 44  
απο του νυν only in Lk. in N.T.
49. δυνατος (of a person) only in Lk. of the gospels
53. εξαποστειλλειν in Lk. 10 cases. Only elsewhere in Gal.
55. λαλειν προς in Luke 14 cases, not in the other gospels.
56. υποστρεφειν Luke 32 cases, wanting in the other gospels.  
υενειν συν only in Luke in the N.T.

## 1:68-79

68. επεσκεψατο Lk. alone uses it of God in the N.T.
69. Σωτηρια is a favourite expression with Lk.
70. Δια στοματος only in Luke in N.T.
- 72-75. ποιησαι με τα exclusively Lucan in N.T.  
λατρευειν Luke 7 times otherwise only once in Matt, in a quotation.

- 76-77. σωτηριας See on vs. 69
- 2:15-20
15. εγενετο see on 1:5  
λαλεω προς see on 1:55  
διερχεσθαι Lk. 30 times, only 6 cases in other gospels.  
ρημα in this usage only in Luke in the N.T.
16. σπευδew in this usage only in Lk. in N.T. (intransitive) only  
in Lk. in N.T.
- 17-18. λαλεω προς see on 1:55
19. συμβαλλew only in Luke in N.T.
20. αυουντες Lk. 7 times, otherwise only in Rom. 15:11 and Rev.  
19:5
- 2:41-52
41. πορευεσθαι 'a favourite word with Luke' - 27 cases  
Matt. once  
Mark twice  
Jn. 3 times
- 42-43. εγενετο see on 1:5  
υποστρεφew see on 1:56
- 44-45. γνωστος Luke 11 cases, only 3 cases in remainder of N.T.
- 46-47. εγενετο see on 1:5
52. χαριτι in Luke 25 cases, elsewhere only in John's prologue.

The Greek is unmistakably Lucan Further, the objection that Lucan style is also noticeable in those sections of the third gospel which have been taken over from Mark is without force. This is because in such cases the fact of a different underlying Greek source is noticeable beneath the Lucan redaction, whereas no such underlying source is noticeable in the infancy narratives.

72. Harnack, *The Date of Acts*, op.cit., p 143.
73. Charles C. Torrey, *Translations Made from the Original Aramaic Gospels*, p 284.
74. Torrey, op.cit., p 286, 287.
75. He quotes the following examples:  
 εποιησεν κρατος εν βραχιονι αυτου 1:51  
 υπερηφανους διανοια καρδιας αυτων 1:51  
 του δουναι ημιν αφοβως εκ χειρος 1:73-74  
 δια σπλαγχνα ελεους θεου ημων 1:78  
 οπως αν αποκαλυφθωσω εκ πολλων καρδιων διαλογισμοι 2:35

Such phrases are Semitic. However there are other cases where the grammar of the Greek text points even more strongly to a Hebrew origin. (Torrey is of the opinion that the Semitic documents were more probably Hebrew than Aramaic.)

1:39 The phrase εις πολιν Ιουδα has long been a perplexity to commentators and translators. It cannot mean 'a city of Judah' since it would then have read εις πολιν της Ιουδαϊας as in vs. 26. Neither can it mean 'a city named Judah' since no such city existed. The problem is only solved by the reference to the Hebrew original which, properly translated, would be 'the province of Judea'. The mistranslation resulted from the fact that by the first century A.D. מדינה was used in the sense of 'city'. However an older use of the word had been 'province'. This word was properly translated as 'province' in such writings as Ezra 5:8; 2 Macc 1:1; Neh. 1:3 and 11:3. Here the Greek word χωραν had been used.

Lk. 1:65 τη ορεινη της Ιουδαϊας shows that the province or area of hill country was being referred to.

Lk. 1:59-64. This passage would make more sense if the remarks of the people were extended in verse 66 to read 'What then will this child be? For the hand of the Lord is with him.' The translator has evidently mistranslated the Hebrew into a past tense instead of a present tense.

Lk. 2:1 'All the world, πασαν την οικουμενην clearly signifies 'all the land' i.e. the Jewish world.

Lk. 2:11 ος εστιν χριστος κυριος should have been translated ος εστιν χριστος κυριος or ο χριστος του κυριου. The Hebrew must have been i.e. 'Jahweh's Anointed', which is such a common Hebrew title.

Lk. 1:51 εποιησεν κρατος εν βραχιονι is not found in the Greek O.T. and clearly comes from a Hebrew original which is reflected in a 'painfully literal kind' of translation. Torrey, op.cit., (p153-154).

76. Torrey, op.cit., p 295.

77. Paul Winter, 'Some Observations on the Language in the Birth and Infancy Stories of the Third Gospel', p 112.

78. Winter firstly discusses the occurrence of the expression in these chapters, and then examines eight cases where he feels an original Semitic source is clearly evident.

Ο κυριος appears extremely frequently in these chapters (1.6,9,11,15,16,17, 28,32,38,44,45,46,47,58,66,68,76; 2.9,11,15,22,23,24,26,39). But for one exception (Lk. 1.43) it always stands for the Semitic Adonai. This is remarkable because elsewhere in the Lucan writings the term is a favourite expression for the man Jesus. Clearly in the infancy narratives Luke's own usage is submerged. His own usage only emerges once. This points to a Semitic source. Further, the following cases point to an original Hebrew source.

1. Lk. 1:7 προβεβηκοτες εν ταις ημεραις αυτων.

In this case εν ηλικια would have been better Greek. Clearly this bad Greek is due to Hebrew (see Gen. 18.11). Luke's phrase cannot be Septuagintal because in translating this phrase the Septuagint never uses the preposition εν as Luke does (see Gen. 24.1; Joshua 13.1; 23.1; 1 Kings 1.1).

2. Lk. 1.17 επιστρεψαι καρδιας πατερων επι τεκνα = Mal. 4.6.

Luke's plural καρδιας πατερων agrees with the original Hebrew against the singular in the Septuagint.



3. Lk. 1.26, 35 *δυναμις υψιστου επισκιασει σοι.*

Here is a typical Hebraic play on the meaning of the name Gabriel. Turner does not reply to this.

4. Lk. 1.37 *ουκ αδυνατησει παρα του θεου παν ρημα.*

A similar phrase is found in Gen. 18.14. Here the Septuagint has *παρα τω θεω*. The Septuagint is better Greek, while Luke's phrase is unnatural in Greek and reflects a literal meaning of the Hebrew.

5. Lk. 1.51 *εποιησεν κρατος εν βραχιονι αυτου.*

Here *κρατος* is closer to the literal Hebrew than *δυναμις* which is used in the Septuagint as the common translation of the Hebrew (see Ps. 89.10; 118.16).

6. Lk. 2.4-18

This section owes much to Mic. 4.8-12 and 5.2-9. There are three cases of note:

1. Lk. 2.4 - *Ανεβη δε και Ιωσηφ απο της Γαλιλαιας εκ πολεως...* here the Hebrew of Mic. 4.10 is 'echoed literally' in *ανεβη...εκ πολεως*.
2. Lk. 2.8 - *αγραυλουντες*. This word is only found here in the N.T. It is not found in the Septuagint. It perfectly conveys the original Hebrew phrase. In the Septuagint we have *κατασκηνωντες εν πεδιω* for this phrase. Luke was familiar with this (see Lk.13.19). His use of this rare word, *αγραυλουντες* must point to a Hebrew source.
3. Lk. 2.13 - *πληθος στρατιας ουρανιου*. This recalls the Hebrew phrase. It occurs nowhere else in the Septuagint for this phrase. Further *στρατια* was used more and more in later Jewish writings in Greek and Greek translations of Hebrew. 'This notion *πληθος στρατιας ουρανιου* is undoubtedly Hebraistic. In this form the expression is non-Septuagintal.'

7. Lk. 2.34

This verse seems to be dependent upon Isa. 7.14. Here again Luke is much closer to the Hebrew than the Septuagint.

Winter concludes;

*In at least seven instances the text of the first two Lucan chapters displays a marked difference from the wording of the LXX and in five of these seven instances there is definite agreement of the text of Luke with that of the M.T. against our LXX. To maintain that this is purely accidental, and to continue assuming that the narrative in Lk. I, II was composed directly in Greek without a Hebrew source document as its basis, means straining credulity too far.'*

*Some Observations...* op. cit., p 113-116.

To this a final conclusive point may be added.

Lk. 1.13. The connection between the meaning of the name Yohanan (Yahweh is gracious) and 'God has granted to thee fulfillment of thy prayer' is poorly expressed by the Greek *εισηκουσθη η δεησις σου*. However the parallelism in the sentence is unmistakeable in Hebrew.

*'On the Margin of Luke I, II', p 103-107.*

Here, as with his first article, Winter is attempting to show the early Jewish Palestinian character of various expressions in Lk. I and II. He gives eight cases;

1. Lk. 1.6 *πορευομαι εν πασαις ταις εντολαις και δικαιωμασω του κυριου αμεμπτοι*.

This phrase is familiar in the O.T. However, almost the exact wording is found also in the Zadokite Fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

2. Lk. 1.33. *βασιλευσει επι*, in the accusative is very rare in the N.T. However this phrase does occur in the Greek text of 2 Sam.2.4. Consequently not too much weight can be placed upon this in Lk.1.33 and as an indication of a Hebrew original.

3. Lk. 1.39. *την ορεινην*. This unspecified and yet absolute term for the Judean uplands is found in the Hebrew text of Jos. 10.40 and 11.16.

4. Lk. 1.59. The Jewish custom of naming boys after their father is attested from the Kfar Bebhayu Deed (discovered in a cave in Wadi Murabbaat). This adds to our previous knowledge of this custom.

5. Lk. 1.68ff. Added to the evidence already adduced in his previous article on the Maccabaeen war songs is the Scroll of War between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness from Qumran Cave I. Here again there are parallels between this war song and Lk. 1:68ff.

6. Lk. 2.11. The term *σημερον* is the equivalent of a Hebrew cultic formula which commemorates an event in the past. The Lucan tradition possibly goes back to a festival kept by the Judean shepherds around Bethlehem. This is further suggested by the fact that the verses dealing with the activity of the shepherds do not seem to fit in very well with the remainder of the story. The 'Nazarene editor' may have used an existing pastoral tradition concerning the appearance of angels to some shepherds.

*'Σωτηρ* is neither 'Pauline' nor 'Hellenistic'.

7. Lk. 2.29. *Δεσποτης* is an unusual word for Luke. Winter believes it reflects a Hebrew original.

8. Lk. 2.52. *προεκοπτεν εν τη σοφια* is also Hebraic. The Greek text of 1 Sam. 2.26 does not explain the inclusion of *εν* in Luke. *προκοπτειν εν ηλικια* is not found in the Septuagint, and it is not sound Greek. 'It is an inept translation of a Hebrew expression'.

His translation of the Magnificat and Benedictus is given in 'Magnificat and Benedictus - Maccabaeen Psalms?', p 328 -347.

79. René Laurentin, *Traces D'Allusions Etymologiques en Luc. 1-2*.

In Gen. 21:3 Abraham's own son is called Isaac, meaning 'laughter'. The meaning of the name is explained in Gen. 21:6. However in the narrative prior to this there are three instances where his name is alluded to, Gen. 17:17; 18:12 and 18:15. Subsequent to the giving of the name there are two more veiled allusions. In Gen. 21:9 Sarah saw Ishmael 'playing' with Isaac. The same Hebrew root is common to the two words. Again in Gen. 26:8 Abimelech saw Isaac 'fondling' Rebecca. Again the same Hebrew root occurs.

In Gen. 30:23-24 the meaning of the name Joseph is explained by a similar play on words (shame or reproach). Laurentin finds numerous other veiled allusions to this name. Gen. 35:17 'Fear not, for now you will have *another son*.' Gen. 37:5,8 'his brother *hated him the more*', 'so they *hated him the more*'. Gen. 42:17 'and he *put them all together in prison for three days*.' Gen. 49:29 - 'I am to be *gathered to my people*.' Gen. 49:33 'When Jacob finished charging his sons, he *drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people*'. Then in Gen. 50 : 1-2 the name Joseph is twice repeated. The same root is found in all these words.

80. Laurentin tabulates the results of his work as follows:

|              |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. Jesus:    | 2:11 | 1:69 | 2:30 | 1:47 | 1:71 | 1:77 |
| 2. John:     | 1:13 | 1:58 | 1:72 | 1:54 | 1:78 | 1:50 |
| 3. Gabriel   | 1:17 | 1:35 | 1:49 | 1:52 | 1:20 | 1:22 |
| 4. Zechariah | 1:72 | 1:54 |      |      |      |      |
| 5. Elizabeth | 1:72 | 1:55 |      |      |      |      |
| 6. Mary      | 1:69 | 1:78 | 1:46 | 1:35 | 1:32 | 2:14 |

81. Laurentin, *Traces*, op.cit.

82. Laurentin, *Traces*, op.cit.

83. Nigel Turner, *The Relations of Luke 1 and 11 to Hebraic Sources and to the Rest of Luke-Acts*, p 100.

84. Turner, op.cit., p 108.

85. Turner, op.cit., p 101.

86. Pierre Benoit, *L'Enfance de Jean-Baptiste, Selon Luc. 1*, p 169-194.

87. Benoit, op.cit.

88. Turner, op.cit.,

Lk. 1.7. Admittedly *εν* is inserted, but both *προβαλεω* and *ημεραι* are Septuagintal and are not inevitable choices.

Lk. 1.17. Turner replies that *καρις* may diverge from the Septuagint but is further away from the other elements of the Hebrew phrase. He explains the situation by suggesting that Luke's Greek Bible was different from ours.

Lk. 1.37. Turner replies that in other ways Luke agrees with the Septuagint. For instance both Luke and the Septuagint translate the Hebrew with Θεός and both have παρα which is not an inevitable way of rendering the Hebrew. Furthermore, αδυνατεω is not the most obvious translation but it is also shared by Luke and the Septuagint. *'There must be then some relationship with the LXX'*.

Lk. 1.51. Turner replies that κρατος does appear in the Septuagint, in the Wisdom of Solomon 17.2. Luke may have been influenced by these passages. He does admit that κρατος is more appropriate in this context than δυναμις.

89. Paul Winter, *'On Luke and Lucan sources: A Reply to the Reverend N. Turner'*, p 217-242.

Lk. 1.7 προβαλεω *'might not be an inevitable choice...but it is an obvious choice'* in the Greek language. It is unwarranted to say that a person who uses this word must have used the Septuagint. Winter also disagrees that ημεραι must be Septuagintal. The preposition εν is not *'inserted'* by Luke. It is there because it stands for what is there in the original Hebrew.

Lk. 1.17. The Hebrew expression *'the heart of the fathers'* cannot be translated directly into Greek. One must either translate it *'the hearts of the fathers'* or *'the heart of the father'*. The Septuagint translators chose the latter, but Luke chose the former. This shows he was giving an independent translation of the Hebrew.

Lk. 1.37. On the use of θεός Winter replies that Luke was not necessarily using the Hebrew text of Genesis. He was not quoting Genesis but using another Hebrew source from which Θεός may have been the only appropriate translation. With regard to παρα Winter comments that it is not the word itself which is significant, but the way it is used. In the Septuagint it bears the meaning *'with God'* while in Luke it bears the meaning *'from God'*.

*'It is therefore not the Septuagintal παρα but a different παρα which we find in Lk. 1.37.'*

With regard to αδυνατησει Winter comments by giving three separate cases in the Septuagint where this word is used for the Hebrew. Clearly the word is a natural one to use in this case.

Lk. 1.51. In not one instance which Turner quotes is κρατος used to translate the Hebrew word in question here. He concludes:

*My contention that the rendering of these words in Luke points to an independent translation, uninfluenced by the LXX, remains valid.' (p 226).*

90. Turner, *op.cit.*, p 102.
91. Winter, *'Some Observations'*, *op.cit.*, p 11.
92. Winter, *'On Luke and Lucan Sources'*, *op.cit.*, p 218.
93. Winter, *'On Luke and Lucan Sources'*, *op.cit.*, p 218.

94. Wilson, *op.cit.*, p 252-253. For a similar conclusion see René Laurentin, *Structure et Théologie de Luc 1-2*, p 13.
95. Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, p 140-142.
96. Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, *op.cit.*, p 291-301: A recent survey of the form-critical scholars Dibelius, Vielhauer, Schürmann and K.L. Schmidt is given by Hiroshi Tsuchiya, 'The History and the Fiction in the Birth Stories of Jesus', p 73-90.
97. Bultmann, *History*, *op.cit.*, Martin Dibelius, *Jungfrauensohn und Krippenkind; Untersuchungen zur Geburtsgeschichte Jesu im Lukas Evangelium*.
98. Philipp Vielhauer, 'Das Benedictus des Zacharias', p 255-272.
99. Paul Winter, 'The Proto-Source of Luke 1', p 199.
100. Paul Winter, 'Luke 2.49 and Targum Yerushalmi', p 145-179.
101. Winter, 'The Proto-Source', *op.cit.*
102. Paul Winter, 'Magnificat and Benedictus - Maccabaeen Psalms', p 338.
103. Paul Winter, 'The Main Literary Problem of the Lucan Infancy Story', p 263, 'The Cultural Background of the Narratives in Luke 1 and 11', p 160.
104. Benoit, *op.cit.*, p 179, to quote his statement,

*On le voit, notre rédacteur n'a pas plagié matériellement un épisode de L'A.T. pour en créer de toutes pièces une imitation sans réalité objective. Il est parti, au contraire, d'un donné réel, reçu par tradition orale, et à choisi à travers toute la Bible des épisodes et des formules qu'il a habilement combinés sur sa palette pour en tirer un récit à la fois traditionnel et original, où le coloris biblique se met au service d'une intention théologique.* <sup>265</sup>

*One can see, our writer has not materially borrowed an episode from the O.T. in order to create out of it an imitation without any objective reality. On the contrary he has started off from a real 'given text' (donné) received through oral tradition, and has chosen throughout the whole Bible episodes and formulas which he has skillfully combined on his palette in order to draw from it a narrative at the same time traditional and original, where the biblical colouring is put at the service of a theological intention.*

105. Benoit, *op.cit.*, p 169-194.

106. Schürmann, *op.cit.*, p 95-96.
107. Gore, *op.cit.*, p 33.
108. Bultmann, *History*, *op.cit.*, p 299.
109. Gore, *op.cit.*, p 33.
110. Orr, *op.cit.*, p 127-131.
111. Johan August Wilhelm Neander, *The Life of Jesus Christ*, p 29.
112. Nellessen, *op.cit.*, p 44-45.
113. C.H. Cave, '*St. Matthew's Infancy Narrative*', p 382-396.
114. G.H. Box, *The Virgin Birth of Jesus*, p 20.
115. Nellessen, *op.cit.*, p 46-47.
116. M.D. Goulder and M.L. Sanderson, '*St. Luke's Genesis*', p 12.
117. Goulder and Sanderson, *op.cit.*, p 28.
118. Wilson, *op.cit.*, p 251.
119. Boslooper, *op.cit.*, p 55-80, 135-186.
120. Boslooper, *op.cit.*, p 80.
121. Boslooper, *op.cit.*, p 135.
122. a) **Buddhistic Tradition**

Boslooper makes a distinction between pre-Christian and post-Christian traditions. In the pre-Christian legends about the Buddha, there is no account of a supernatural or virgin birth. In all the accounts there are three factors; the father, the mother and the '*genius*', who co-operates in the whole affair.

In post-Christian legends there are two analogies; the idea of supernatural birth and of immaculate conception. Here the relationship is with the apocryphal rather than the canonical gospels. The idea of a miraculous birth should not be confused with the same term as applied to the canonical gospels. In the Buddhistic legends the Buddha is born out of the side of his mother. There is no pain, no defilement, and no effect upon the mother's womb. Boslooper discovers a number of detailed analogies between the Buddhistic traditions and the apocryphal gospels. In both traditions the child chooses his mother before he is born (i.e. in his supramundane existence), a white elephant (Buddhistic) or white bird (Christian) symbolises the unborn child, the term of pregnancy is ten months, marvels occur in nature, the infant is brilliant like the sun or moon, and has no defilement, in both he immediately announces himself, and in both the traditions the child receives royal pomp and ceremony.

Even with these parallels there is no specific evidence of a virgin birth in the Buddhistic legends. The accounts which are significant are the canonical Pali scriptures, the BuddhaKavisa of Asvaghosa, the Nidanakatha Jataka, the Mahavastu, and the Halita Vistara. All these have been dated by scholars somewhere between A.D. 77 and A.D. 500, usually towards the later date. Boslooper concludes;

*The story of the virgin birth in the New Testament should not be drawn into the question of the relationship between Buddhistic and Christian birth narratives. If there is a bridge... it is at the point of Christian apocryphal traditions. Properly speaking the only possible clear analogy is between Buddhism and old Roman Catholicism. Boslooper, op.cit.,(p 148).*

#### b) 1. Krishna tradition.

In this mythology the deity is both the effective agent in procreation and the offspring. Here the analogies are not precise, and it is not clear how one tradition may have borrowed from another. Boslooper deals with the Hindu Vishnu Purana and the Mahavastu accounts.

#### 2. Assyro-Babylonian affinities.

Affinities have been found in the birth account of great men such as Tukulti-Urta II, Sennacherib, Ashurbanipal, and Sargon of Agade, and in the stories of the births of various gods and goddesses. Boslooper quotes the important passages extensively. He concludes;

*The emphasis of the Assyrian and Babylonian tradition of the mother goddess and the general concurrence of incidents between purely mythological figures portrays ideas of origin on a level foreign to New Testament thought.*

#### 3. Zoroastrian Affinities.

On the surface there are affinities. When Zoroaster is born a wizard by the name of Durasrobo plays the part of Herod and makes various attempts on the child's life. In another case the young maiden of fifteen gives birth without having known a man. However the vital difference is that while the biblical narrative speaks of the direct operation of divine power the Zoroastrian tradition is concerned with the preservation of the seed of Zoroaster which is carried on from generation to generation. The basic idea is entirely different.

#### 4. Mithraic Affinities.

Later Christian tradition did have an association with Mithraism. This is evident from the fact that the birth of Christ was set on the 25 December to co-incide with the Mithraic celebration of the new birth of Sun. In this tradition Mithra was born from a rock and his birth was witnessed by shepherds who were guarding their flocks. Justin Martyr drew attention to the parallel case where Christ was born in a cave according to the Protevangelium Jacobi. There is thus a clear association with the apocryphal tradition. However there is no idea of a virgin birth. The only possible contact with the canonical account is in Luke's story of the shepherds.

c) **Egyptian Tradition.**

There are three cases of note (Boslooper does note a fourth case which need not detain us). Firstly, the legend of the birth of Horus by Isis is said to be a parallel to the virgin birth. Isis discovers the dead Osiris, stirs him up to life, draws his seed from him and conceives. This is obviously not parallel to the N.T. idea of the virgin birth. There is a parallel with the apocryphal accounts of Mary and Jesus. The picture of Isis suckling the child Horus was carried over into the picture of the Madonna and child in Christian tradition.

Secondly, the legend of the god Ré generating with the wife of a priest is said to be similar to the virgin birth. Ré was believed to have once ruled over Egypt. Accordingly every king would somehow trace his lineage to Ré in order to prove that his blood flowed in his veins. The Pharaohs were accustomed to claim that they were physically the son of Ré and a mortal mother. In one account the god Amon goes down to Queen Ahmose while she is sleeping and has intercourse with her. This causes her to conceive.

This leads to the third contact; the fact that Egyptian kings were believed to be divine. This tradition must be seen in the light of the Egyptian understanding of procreation. It was thought that every birth, not only of kings, was the word of a god, in the sense that the god produced the seed in woman, the fluid in man, and the child in the womb. This legend was especially applicable in the case of kings.

Boslooper concludes;

*Egyptian thought is extremely more complex and crude than biblical. A clear analogy to the virgin birth of the New Testament is not to be found in Egyptian tradition (p 167).*

d) **Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Affinities**

Boslooper deals with this section under three headings:

1. **The Birth of the gods**

The basic myth is about the birth of Perseus, who was said to have been born when Jupiter visited his mother in a golden shower. This myth was repeated in the birth stories of many gods. Apollo was born from a union of Zeus and Leto. Hermes was the offspring of Zeus and Maia. Semele bore Dionysus to Zeus. More strangely Athena the Aphrodite was born from Zeus without a mother.

2. **The birth of Heroes**

Theseus and Romulus were reputed to have sprung from the gods. In the case of Oedipus his mother Jocasta could have no child with Laius her husband. She then approached a god, who in a drunken rage gave way to his lust and caused her to conceive. From other accounts it is clear that Oedipus was believed to have been the offspring of Jocasta and Laius. Boslooper remarks;

*The two passages indicate that in the Greek mind the thoughts of divine and human paternal participation in conception were not mutually exclusive (p 178).*



### 3. The Theory of Hellenistic influence

Alexander the great was 'virgin born' according to some scholars, as were the Ptolemies and the Caesars. It is recorded that Alexander journeyed to the Oasis of Amen that he may be recognised as a god's son. The legend about the birth of Augustus was extensive. When Atia came to the service of Apollo she fell asleep in the temple.

During her sleep a serpent came upon her and caused her to conceive. Augustus was therefore divinely conceived. Added to his divine conception was the strong hope expressed in Virgil to the effect that a divine child would be born who would usher in a new era and bring back the golden age.

In all these cases there is no specific parallel to the N.T. account of the virgin birth. That does not mean that no analogy can be drawn between the two.

123. Boslooper, *op.cit.*, p 185.
124. Boslooper, *op.cit.*, p 186.
125. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 209.
126. Von Campenhausen, *op.cit.*, p 20-21.
127. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 281-282.
128. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 282-284.
129. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 284.
130. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 285.
131. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 287-297.
132. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 297-312.
133. A.R. C. Leaney, *The Birth Narratives in St. Luke and St. Matthew*, p 166.
134. Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, *op.cit.*, p 148.
135. Harnack, *Date of Acts*, *op.cit.*, p 155.
136. Winter, *Cultural Background*, *op.cit.*, p 160.
137. Schürmann, *op.cit.*, p 140-145.
138. Robert H. Gundry, *The Language Milieu of first-century Palestine ; its Bearings on the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition*, p 404-408.
139. Lobstein, *op.cit.*, p 72.
140. Raymond Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*, p 38-47.
141. Orr, *op.cit.*, p 154, 185-187.

142. Brown, Conception, op.cit., p 53-61.
143. Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 48-54, 241-250.
144. Brown, Conception, op.cit., p 65-66, Birth, op.cit., p 534-542.
145. Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 188-190, 225-228.
146. Boslooper, op.cit., p 83-109.
147. Boslooper, op.cit., p 113-132.
148. See chapter three below.
149. Reimarus, op.cit., p 230.
150. Reimarus, op.cit., p 234-235.
151. Strauss, op.cit., p 78.
152. Strauss, op.cit., p 74.
153. Strauss, op.cit., p 89-92.
154. Gore, op.cit., p 52.
155. Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of Saint Luke*; Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time; The Christology of the New Testament*.
156. He mentions Lk. 1-2 as follows; *Theology*, op.cit., p 20, note 3; p 22, note 2; p 101, note 1; p 18, note 1; p 16, note 3; p 48, 76, 183, note 2.
157. Conzelmann, *Theology*, op.cit., p 193-194.
158. H.H. Oliver, '*The Lucan Birth Stories and the Purpose of Luke-Acts*', p 202-226.
159. Oliver, op.cit.
160. W. Barnes Tatum, '*The Epoch of Israel: Luke 1-2 and the Theological Plan of Luke-Acts*', p 193.
161. Paul S. Minear, '*St. Luke's Use of the Birth Narratives*', p 122.
162. I. H. Marshall, *Luke, Historian and Theologian*, p 92.
163. Marshall, *Luke, Historian*, op.cit., p 98-102.
164. His doctoral dissertation was a redactional criticism of Matthew's infancy narrative, which is reflected in '*Tradition and Redaction in Matt. 1. 18- 2.23*'. His study of the genealogy is found in '*The fulfilment of creation, A study of Matthew's Genealogy*'.
165. Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew, Structure, Christology, Kingdom*.
166. Heinz Joachim Held, in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, p 237-241.

167. Paul S. Minear, *The Interpreter and the Birth Narratives*, p 22.
168. Anthony Thiselton, *The Two Horizons, New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer and Wittgenstein*.
169. Minear, *The Interpreter*, op.cit., p 11.
170. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

1. In the infancy narratives we have the '*historical account*' of Christ's entrance into the world, and in the resurrection narratives we have the '*historical account*' of his departure. Thomas Paine believed that because the disciples fraudulently brought Jesus into the world in a miraculous manner, they must needs take him out of the world in the same manner. Karl Barth compared the revelation of the resurrection through the '*sign*' of the empty tomb to the revelation of the Incarnation through the '*sign*' of the virgin birth. Both are signs of mysteries which fit together as the beginning and the end. Accordingly, for Barth, those who attack the virgin birth also attack the resurrection.

2. Van Austin Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer*.

Harvey draws attention to the importance of the work of Ernst Troeltsch. He is of the opinion that the subsequent history of Protestant theology since the enlightenment can be seen as a succession of salvage attempts to rescue traditional belief from the dilemma presented by the historical method.

3. A term used by Harvey to denote the approach to truth adopted by traditional Christian theology on the one hand, and on the other the approach of the enlightenment.

4. Carl E. Braaten, *New Directions in Theology Today*, Vol II, History and Hermeneutics, p 91f.

5. The importance of Troeltsch needs little justification. His work represents one of the clearest definitions of the historical-critical method itself. See Harvey, *op.cit.*, p 3-4.

The importance of Bradley needs more justification. Here it is of great interest to note that of all the scholars who have influenced the debate on this issue, R.G. Collingwood singles out Bradley. He begins his study of Scientific History in England with Bradley. R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, p 134.

Harvey similarly makes much use of Bradley and states that in his view, Bradley's work has been neglected. Van Harvey, *op.cit.*, p 65, note 8.

It would seem that Bradley's importance has not been fully appreciated. However, the publication of his principal thesis on the subject in a recent work by Pierre Fruchon is at least one attempt to draw attention to his work. Pierre Fruchon, *Les Présupposés de L'Histoire Critique étude et Traduction*. Collingwood mentions that Bradley's work grew out of '*the condition of Biblical criticism as developed by the Tübingen school, notably F.C.Baur and David Strauss*'.

Collingwood, *op.cit.*, p 135. Fruchon also notes the relationship between Baur and the work of Bradley, *op.cit.*, p 16f, 25f, 89f.

6. Martin Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ*.

7. Braaten, *op.cit.*, p 60.

8. Richard Niebuhr is important because his *Resurrection and Historical Reason*, was a formative influence in the development of the new position. The latter two are important because from widely differing theological positions they have both attracted a '*school*' of followers in the '*New Theology of the Resurrection*'. Pannenberg on the one hand stands in the '*radical*' tradition of German N.T.

scholarship, while Montgomery represents the 'conservative evangelical' approach in Anglo-American theology. Their thinking is quite similar at many points.

9. He calls it the '*philosophy of experience*', which believes that the subject can be purely passive in the reception of experiential data. It believes that upon reception of such data, the mind can honestly fabricate a true mould of reality, uncoloured by the vantage point of the subject. Such an idea is to him the product of the '*uncritical mind*.' '*It is the pursuit of a phantom forever doomed to fade in our embraces, a mocking shadow...whose existence must perish at the threshold of human possession.*' Fruchon, op.cit., p 143.

10. To quote him;

*There is no such thing as a history without prejudication: the real distinction is between the writer who has his prejudications without knowing what they are, and whose prejudications it may be are false, and the writer who consciously orders and creates from the known foundation of that which, for him, is truth. It is when history becomes aware of its presuppositions that it first becomes truly critical.* Fruchon, op.cit., p 155.

- 11; William H. Dray, *Philosophy of History*, p 21-39.

12. Fruchon, op.cit., p 155.

13. Fruchon, op.cit., p 157.

14. Fruchon, op.cit., p 169.

15. *The sole justification of such a result ( i.e. of probability) is in the accordance of the conclusion of the hypothesis with the known world. And that is the present world, the verifiable world...the world of science.* Fruchon, op.cit., p 181.

16. Fruchon, op.cit., p 183.

17. Fruchon, op.cit., p 187.

18. Fruchon, op.cit., p 199.

19. Ernst Troeltsch, '*Historiography*'.

Troeltsch wrote with a strong impression of the radical change that had taken place in the Western mind. This change had made itself evident in the understanding of nature ( i.e. the modern scientific enterprise), in the '*new conception of history*', and in the '*new conditions of social life on its economic and industrial sides and the sociological mode of thought*' ( p 716). In the realm of history this change had particularly affected traditional belief. In his understanding, the biblical view of history had blurred the truly critical beginnings made in Greek historiography by its '*mythology of redemption*' and its '*miracle of the Incarnation*.' In contrast to this mythological view, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment had brought with it '*a type of history which elaborated and appraised its materials with the freedom of an emancipated scholarship*' ( p 717). '*The latter...*

*forms a new scientific mode of representing man and his development, and, as such, shows at all points an absolute contrast to Biblico-theological views of later antiquity' (p 718).*

20. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 718.

21. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 718.

22. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 719.

23. Harvey, op.cit., p 14-15.

24. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 721.

25. Harvey, op.cit., p 14.

26. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 718.

27. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 718.

28. This should not lead us to believe that he held this principle uncritically or without a certain amount of philosophical sophistication. He is emphatic that historical causality, following Kant, should be distinguished from natural causality or evolution. He criticises Hegel for having confused two different types of causality.

*Hegel made the mistake of reducing each of these conceptions of development to the other, and also of basing both together upon the metaphysicological movement of the Absolute. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 722.*

29. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 721.

30. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 720.

31. Troeltsch, op.cit., p 719.

32. According to W.G. Kümmel 'Scientific Study of the New Testament is indebted to two men, Johann Salomo Semler and Johann David Michaelis, for the first evidences of a consciously historical approach to the New Testament.' Kümmel, *The New Testament, A History of the Investigation of its Problems* (p 62-69).

Stephen Neill, op.cit., makes much of the three Cambridge scholars, Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort. He analyses their critical procedure as follows;

*Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort wrestled with this problem, and from the beginning they were agreed on certain principles which diverged rather radically from those generally accepted by the Germans. A New Testament commentary, they held, must be critical; it must be based on the most accurate Greek text...it must be linguistic and must accept the necessity of minute*

*philological study...it must be historical, relating each book to the situation in which it appears to have been written...it must be exegetical; it must endeavour to make plain to the reader what the words meant, to the one who wrote them and to his first readers. ( p 87 ),*

He notes their conviction that the scholar must have an open mind, *'with the conviction that absolutely anything may be true, provided that it does not offend against the logical law of contradiction.'* ( p 89).

Collingwood emphasises the importance of evidence in historical thinking.

*History has this in common with every other science, that the historian is not allowed to claim any single piece of knowledge...except where he can justify his claim by exhibiting to himself...and to anyone else...the grounds upon which it is based. op.cit., p 252.*

In this sense *'critical history'* is *'inferential history'*. Collingwood also emphasises that the historian only *'confers'* authority on an ancient document once he has good reasons for doing so. No document automatically has authority simply because it is an ancient document.

In his survey of the rise of historical criticism, Edgar Krentz mentions numerous *'fathers'* of the method, each with his own view of the subject, and at numerous points the origins of *'thoroughly historical'* study are supposed to have begun. Thus the reformers are credited with the literal-grammatical concept of study. Jean Mabillon is credited with the method of discovering the date and authenticity of ancient documents. Descartes is usually regarded as the author of methodical doubt. Baruch Spinoza initiated the idea that the Bible should be studied as any other book. Richard Simon, who influenced J.S. Semler and J.D. Michaelis *'used the evident and the rational as criteria'*. The English Deists established the idea that the scholar should never rely upon *'authorities'*, and Johann Jakob Wettstein advocated the concept of seeing ancient documents in the context of those to whom they were originally addressed. Johann Philipp Gabler is usually credited with the distinction between dogmatic theology and historical criticism. Barthold Georg Niebuhr *'sought at a minimum to discover with probability the web of events'* and consistently asked two questions, namely, *'What is the evidence?'* and *'What is the value of the evidence?'* Ferdinand Christian Baur emphasised that history should be seen as a sequence of interrelated causes and effects. Edgar Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method*, p 6-32.

Modern historians similarly define history and historical study in a variety of ways. History may be defined as the investigation of *'what happened, and why?'* The historian reduces the available sources to a meaningful narrative by a process of questions which he directs to his sources in order to discover that which is significant in the past. The historian stands in dialectical relation to the object of his study. He has a respect for the integrity of the text and seeks to hear what the text has to say to him. In this manner he may learn a fresh understanding of himself and his methods. History is a *'method of collecting all possible witnesses...evaluating what they say, relating the findings to one another in coherent structure, and presenting the conclusion with the evidence'* Krentz, op.cit., p 41.

Harvey defines the discipline of historical writing in terms of autonomy, assessment and sound judgment. More basic than such qualities, one finds that historical thought has a particular structure of argument. Relying on Stephen Toulmin, Harvey constructs a model of the structure of historical argumentation. This involves;

*1. formulating a question, 2. marshalling the various likely candidates that seem indicated by the evidence, 3. searching for a particular candidate that seems indicated by the evidence, and 4. eliminating the alternatives...*

The more detailed structure of the argument involves an interrelation of questions data, warrants, qualifications, rebuttals, backings and conclusions, Harvey, op.cit., p 50f .

33. Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method, op.cit., p 33.

34. Such a task has become vital to N.T. research. According to Krentz;

*Historical method is in its general axioms at best not hostile to theology, at worst, a threat to the central message of the scripture. Theology must either justify...and define its nature or be willing to reformulate the Christian faith in terms of positivistic truth that historicism alone will validate, Krentz, op.cit., p 61.*

He believes the former should be, and has been, chosen by the majority of scholars.

*In recent years the integration of faith and historical method has been accomplished by challenging the adequacy of historical method's and positivist axioms...Biblical criticism has to challenge a view of reality that operates with a closed universe and an absolutely naturalist ontology, Krentz, Historical Method, op.cit., p 68.*

35. In this regard, what Collingwood defines as the basic element of critical history must be left to stand. It is the very nature of any kind of scientific thought to depend upon proper inference. Any hypothesis can only stand upon grounds which are properly demonstrated and which are open to verification or falsification.

Further, the autonomy of the historian, provided that word is used without the connotation of a privately held and uncriticisable position, must be left to stand; and the concept of conferring authority upon a witness rather than accepting a mere 'authority' must be accepted. This latter principle can be described as the principle of methodical doubt. Here it ought to be distinguished however from an unreasonable historical scepticism. The concept of historical criticism as defined by Kümmel in his discussion of Semler and Michaelis must clearly be accepted, and surely there can be no argument with the principles laid down by Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort, though in this case the attempt to deal 'only with the facts' may be considered a little naive today in the light of the reaction from positivism to historical relativism. Also there should be little argument



with the broad definition of history and historical study which is surveyed in the work of Edgar Krentz.

36. In fact, the only disciplines where indubitable proof is possible are in the realm of mathematics and formal logic. In this case the indubitable proofs amount to tautologies. In all the natural sciences, scientific theories themselves are subject to probability.
37. However, this principle has produced a great deal of debate in theological circles because it is believed that faith cannot be allowed to depend upon the contingencies of historical probability. Faith must have certainty. The dialectical theologians since Martin Kähler have universally balked at this principle. They have retreated into the subjective in order to find a certain ground for faith. But this has raised problems of its own. The basis of the issue here is the relationship between faith and reason. Which comes first? Those involved in the old Quest have been accused of basing faith upon the rationalistic acceptance of historical facts. The dialectical theologians have gone so far as to accuse those who seek for an objective historical basis for faith of denying the Protestant principle of justification. Objective facts based upon history have been equated with placing confidence in the *'flesh'*. To anticipate a later discussion, Wolfhart Pannenberg has answered this problem by proposing that faith and reason cannot be separated from each other. To quote Carl E. Braaten's analysis of his position;

*The dilemma can be resolved only if what are called "reason" and "faith" are not separable facts, following a chronological or psychological sequence, but are actually co-essential dimensions of a total act of a person. Braaten, op.cit., p 49 .*

To use traditional terminology, this means that *fides historica* and *fides salvifica* cannot be separated into two compartments. The kerygma asks for an existential decision of faith but includes in its proclamation the revelation of God's salvation in objective historical facts ( 1 Cor.15.1-4).

The probability of historical facts does not therefore threaten faith. Faith rests simultaneously on both objective facts and subjective experience. To divorce one from the other leads either to rationalism or irrationalism.

38. John Warwick Montgomery, *The Suicide of Christian Theology*, p 272.
39. Neill, *op.cit.*, p 89.
40. Nineteenth century historians of Jesus were, it seems, completely sincere in their attempt to write *'objective history'* and deal *'only with the facts'*. As Harvey has shown, the great thrust of the Enlightenment was this will-to-truth; or what he calls *'the enlightened morality of historical knowledge'*, Harvey, *op.cit.*, p 102. Positivism was not the basic problem, though, if we may be pardoned for the phrase, their positivism was perhaps too positivistic. The dialectical school has reacted to the wrong thing and this wrong diagnosis has not assisted the progress of N.T. research.
41. To quote Rudolf Bultmann;

*The historical method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by the succession of cause and effect.*

The continuum *'cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural transcendent powers.'* Existence and Faith, p 291-292.

42. Harvey, op.cit., p 30.

43. Dray, op.cit., p 41-42.

44. His position is in many ways a reaction against the influence of Hegel and Marx and their dialectical idea of progress. Popper terms this *'historicism'* and unfortunately uses the term in a rather loose sense. E.H.Carr, *What is History?* p 91.

45. Commenting on the belief of T.H.Huxley in a *'law of evolution of organic forms-of the unvarying order of that great chain of causes and effects of which all organic forms, ancient and modern, are the links...'* he says *'I believe that the answer to this question must be "No"'*. Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, p 108.

46. Popper, op.cit., p 114.

*no sequence of say, three or more casually connected concrete events, proceeds according to any law of nature...There are neither laws of succession nor laws of evolution.*  
(p 117)

47. Popper, op.cit., p 105-130.

48. Carr, op.cit., p 87-108.

49. Carr, op.cit., p 93.

50. Carr, op.cit., p 99.

51. Carr cannot accept Marx's idea of the course of history only being retarded or accelerated by contingent events. On the other hand he cannot accept what he believes to be the other extreme reflected by Sir Isaiah Berlin and Karl Popper to the effect that *'everything is possible in human affairs.'* Neither can he accept that it is possible to reduce the whole of history to a systematic order: *'no sane historian pretends to do anything so fantastic as to embrace "the whole of experience"; he cannot embrace more than a minute fraction of the facts of his chosen sector or aspect of history.'* Carr, op.cit., p 103.

At this point we might comment that Carr seems to have missed the point of Popper's criticism. It may be true that no such system of historiography is possible, but that does not face the fact that Hegel and Marx did attempt precisely such an all embracing explanation of universal history. Christian historiography has often sought to give a systematic view of history. For instance Wolfhart Pannenberg proposes just such an approach. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, Vol.1, p 66-80. The point is that when such a systematic historiography is advocated it is easy to propound some determinative principle which amounts to a fossilization of history, and it is this kind of reductionism that lies at the root of Troeltsch's principle of correlation.

52. Carr does not have much time for a Christian world view;

*'So far as I am concerned, I have no belief in Divine Providence, World Spirit,*

*Manifest Destiny, History with a capital H, or any other of the abstractions which have sometimes been supposed to guide the course of events.* Carr, op.cit., p 49.

However, Carr voices this as a personal belief and does not allow his somewhat materialistic or humanistic world view to affect the flexibility of his definition of causality.

53. Collingwood, op.cit., p 214-215.

54. Dray, op.cit., p 43-47.

55. Pannenberg, Basic Questions, op.cit., p 42-43.

*'It belongs to the full meaning of the Incarnation that God's redemptive deed took place within the universal correlative connections of human history and not in a ghetto of redemptive history...'* (p 41).

56. His indebtedness is to the Idealistic philosophy of Hegel. *'Bradley always maintained that he was indifferent to the sources of his ideas; but he was...deeply indebted to G.W.F.Hegel...'*

In his thinking (Bradley's) *'The only true reality is to be found in an all-inclusive experience, the Absolute, wherein all contradictions, including the gulf between subject and object, are finally transcended.'* The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Ed. F.L.Cross, p 191.

Idealism in turn has links with the earlier Empiricist tradition of John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume, principally through George Berkeley. Colin Brown, Philosophy and the Christian Faith, p 117.

Describing the epistemology of John Locke, Colin Brown has this to say;

*Our observation employed either about external operations of our minds, perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understanding with materials of thinking. These two are the foundations of knowledge.' 'What the mind perceives is the data conveyed to it by the senses, upon which it then gets to work and interprets.* (p 62)

This epistemology has clear links with Bradley's argumentation. This is despite the fact that Bradley strongly criticises the *'philosophy of experience'*.

57. *The assumption that lies close at hand, which goes back to empiricism and was still determinative for the neo-Kantian philosophers of history.....namely, that analogical conclusions ultimately start with present sense experience, has been disputed for good reasons... The priority of the phenomena of expression over all introspective psychology was rightly stressed. Pannenberg, Basic Questions, op.cit., p 44.*

58. Colin Brown, Philosophy, op.cit., p 66.

59. Collingwood, op.cit., p 139.

60. Collingwood, *op.cit.*, p 140.
61. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, *op.cit.*, p 46.
62. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, *op.cit.*, p 48-49.
63. Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 37.
64. *'To indicate this way out, and so to remove a cause of uncertainty that has come to attach to the vital point of Christian conviction was the real purpose of my first essay.'* Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 123.
65. *'How can we make the Bible accessible to those who deny all revelation?'* Let us fix our attention on the position of the ordinary Christian.' Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 143-174. This was the nature of his question, and this question was asked in a specific historical context, namely, in what Alec Vidler has termed the 'Age of revolution.' Alec R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution, 1789 to the Present Day*.
66. *The correct sequence is never this: first to acknowledge the form and then the substance, that is first to declare that this book is revelation ( as advocated by the orthodox theologians) and then appropriate its contents for oneself.* Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 134.  
  
*no-one...has surrendered himself in trust to the word of God, unless others have first proclaimed to him that there is a word of God and that it is now up to him whether he will also believe it.*  
Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 144.
67. *We must go to the context of the earliest preaching and, starting with a minimum of what can be historically ascertained, introduce them to problems which serious research cannot easily dismiss.* Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 144.
68. *In reality therefore we are not able to separate Christ and the Bible...The witness of the Bible is woven into every aspect of our developing relation to Christ...Faith's view of the Saviour is continually clarified and deepened by the witness of the Bible...In this relation to Christ the maturing Christian finds that the distinction between "through" the Bible and "for the sake of" Christ finally loses its significance.* Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 86-87.
69. Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 87.

70. *Without apprehension or anxiety he can grant to historical research all the freedom it desires, to investigate the compilation of the biblical canon and the age and literary construction of the books and portions thereof. He will be confident that Achilles's lance will possess healing as well as wounding power. It is our opinion that historical research will itself refute its own excesses, where there have been such, and will demonstrate their erroneousness.*  
Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 140 .

Notice that this means that faith is not at this point impervious to historical criticism.

71. Admittedly, he may be more positive about the extent of that bare minimum than another scholar. This will be due to his differing presuppositions. *'So far no one has promised, much less managed, to work out such a minimum...without employing any presuppositions whatsoever'*. Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 121. In fact, *'every biographer of Jesus must make a Christology the presupposition of his research.'*
72. *Yet he seems as lifelike and real as if we had seen him with our own eyes. How could such a realistic picture of the sinless One be a poetic creation?...The biblical picture of Christ, so lifelike and unique beyond imagination, is not a poetic idealization originating in the human mind....The reality of Christ himself has left its ineffaceable impress upon this picture.* Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 79.

Numerous examples of this kind of statement could be given.

73. For instance, he argues for the essential consistency of the N.T. documents in their portrayal of the person of Christ. There is no inconsistency between the apostolic doctrinal writings and the Synoptic Gospels. Kähler, *op.cit.*, p82 . He argues for the necessity of understanding the person of Christ against the background of the O.T. revelation, an argument which runs in similar vein to the statements which Pannenberg is inclined to make in his historical argument (p85). He argues from the authority with which Jesus offered forgiveness of sins and judged men to the uniqueness of his person, an argument which is becoming popular in the so-called *'New Quest'* ( p82 note 14).
74. Kähler, *op.cit.*, p 52,80.
75. Braaten, *op.cit.*, p 61.
76. Richard R. Niebuhr draws attention to another source of the *Geschichte-Historie* dualism in the philosophy of Emmanuel Kant. Niebuhr, *op.cit.* Like Kähler, Kant was facing a situation where theology was in retreat before *'enlightened reason'*. He could claim for his philosophy that it had made room once more for faith in Christian theology. His *Critique of Pure Reason* and his *Critique of Practical Reason* made a distinction between human cognition in the realm of

the experiential, phenomenal world, and human cognition in the intuitive and moral area. In this way he could preserve both the methods of natural science and metaphysics. Theology must operate exclusively in the realm of a priori and intuitive reason, i.e. in the realm of moral and metaphysical categories. This did give a greater validity to theology at the time. However, such a distinction made it impossible for human reason to find evidence of God in the realm of nature and experience. History and nature tended to be identified in positivistic historiography. This meant that it became impossible to find evidence of God in history. Added to this was the definition which Kant gave to historical thinking. His idea of history was '*orientated on the concept of the normative rather than on the category of the individual*' (p77).

The implications of such a philosophy for the witness of the N.T. are clear. Human reason cannot find evidence of God in a historical figure, let alone an individual historical event like the resurrection.

This meant that the basis of Christian faith must be found in the area of practical reason, although the N.T. witnessed to the revelation of God in history. The only answer was, therefore, to postulate a category of history which was distinct from nature and human experience. The concept of *Geschichte* answers to this requirement. Redemption-history is regarded as a realm of its own, untouched by the arguments and probability of scientific or natural history.

Events which take place in this realm cannot be regarded as '*fact*' in the scientific-historical sense. They are not accessible to historical research. They transcend the realm of *Historie*. Such a concept may have helped to make room for theological assertions in the world of natural science, but it raises insuperable difficulties for a true understanding of the N.T.

The dualistic influence of Neo-Kantian philosophy on Bultmann, and its implications for his view of history, have been carefully examined by Anthony Thiselton. His examination of Bultmann's hermeneutics is not only thorough, but places Bultmann in the context of the philosophy of Wittgenstein and the implications of Wittgenstein's philosophy for N.T. hermeneutics. This is particularly helpful for this chapter because, as we shall indicate below, one of the contributors to the '*new theology of the resurrection*', namely Montgomery, uses Wittgenstein in particular as a basis for his historiography. Both Thiselton and Montgomery therefore make use of Wittgenstein to find a corrective to the hermeneutics of the dialectical school.

Thiselton distinguishes between the '*sources*' of Bultmann's hermeneutics prior to his indebtedness to Heidegger and those subsequent to Heidegger. In the case of the former period he examines;

1. Theological liberalism.
2. Neo-Kantian philosophy.
3. Nineteenth-century Lutheranism.
4. The History of Religions School.
5. Dialectical theology.

**The Two Horizons, New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer and Wittgenstein, p 205-226.**

Thiselton points out firstly that the particular type of Neo-Kantian philosophy in question was associated with the Marburg circle, which he describes as '*Marburg Neo-Kantianism*'. This philosophical influence is always found in Bultmann's thinking in conjunction with his particular brand of Lutheranism ( p 210-211).

In the thinking of the Neo-Kantian philosophers the Kantian 'thing' is replaced by the 'object', as a product of thought. Thought constructs objects on the basis of universal laws; 'To know is to objectify in accordance with the principle of law' (p 210). This form of knowing is radically distinguished for Bultmann from the area of truth discovered by personal encounter. God cannot therefore be known through general truth or objectification. This rejection of general law or objectification is fused with Luther's rejection of reliance on the 'law' for justification (p 212-213). It is at this point that Bultmann's thinking links up with that of Kähler. Kähler similarly rejected the idea that faith could rest on general, or critical history (p 214-215). Thiselton summarises the dualism of Bultmann's pre-Heidegger thinking as follows,

*Justification by works stands in contrast to justification by faith; nature stands in contrast to grace; the indicative and the realm of facts, stand in contrast to the imperative, and the realm of will; information is set over against address; objectification is set over against encounter (p 217).*

If Neo-Kantianism provided Bultmann with a basis for rejecting 'objectification', Heidegger provided Bultmann with the basis for emphasising truth as subjective encounter. In Heidegger's view history is not what is by virtue of the 'historicality of *Dasein*'. The focus of history is not the past, but the present (p 184). This dichotomy is associated with Heidegger's distinction between the inauthentic 'they' and the authentic discovery of being in the 'I'. 'In inauthentic existence the "they" tries to build history only on the occurrence of "facts" or "events" of the past... By contrast, authentic historicality involves *Dasein*'s existential awareness of itself through which it understands itself as Being in history...' (p 186).

This is the basis of Bultmann's oft quoted statement,

*For the past only become historical phenomena when they become significant for a subject which itself stands in history and is involved in it... The demand that the interpreter must silence his subjectivity and extinguish his individuality in order to attain to an objective knowledge is therefore, the most absurd one that can be imagined (p 190-191).*

Bultmann's view of history is based on a radical dualism between nature and history. When man observes nature, he observes something objective. When he turns to history, he observes himself as part of it. History cannot be viewed objectively, because 'in every word which he says about history he is saying at the same time something about himself' (p 246). This nature-history dualism leads to Bultmann's historical dualism. There are two forms of historical knowledge, the inauthentic (following Heidegger) secondary level of historical brute facts, and the authentic, primary knowledge of history viewed existentially. According to Heinrich Ott, this double concept of history 'turns on the terminological contrast between *Geschichte* and event (*Ereignis*, *Geschehen*) on the one side, and *Historie*, fact, nature, and object, on the other' (p 246). Bultmann carries through his dualism to the extent that it extends from a methodological to an ontological principle. The nature of his dualism may be stated differently at different times ('nature versus history, being versus existence,

*cosmology versus anthropology, cosmologised history versus historicised cosmology*'), but his primarily dualistic view of reality does not change ( p 249). Bultmann defines history as follows,

*Similarly, history can be viewed in different ways: first of all, in an objectivising manner in so far as it presents the picture of a chain of cause and effect...On the other hand, history can also be understood as the range of possibilities for human self-understanding, which range is disclosed precisely in man's decisions ( p 248).*

While the main thrust of Bultmann's rejection of objective history is grounded on Neo-Kantian philosophy and the thinking of Heidegger, it is not possible to eliminate the influence of theological liberalism at this point. His concept of history as a closed system of cause and effect must be understood in terms of the older view of nature as a closed system, where laws of nature were understood prescriptively rather than descriptively ( p 260-262).

This is evident, it would seem to us, in Bultmann's explicit statement,

*The historical method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by the succession of cause and effect...This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers and that therefore there is no "miracle" in this sense of the word. Existence and Faith, p 291-292.*

Thiselton's primary thesis in his work is to bring about a proper balance between interpreter and text in hermeneutics, in what he terms a '*fusion of horizons*'. The positive contribution of Heidegger and Bultmann is in their focus on the interpreter. However this focus can lead to an overemphasis on the role of the interpreter and an erosion of the autonomy of the text. As a corrective to this tendency Thiselton uses the thinking of Gadamer and Wittgenstein. The former is responsible for the concept of the fusion of two horizons, and emphasises that there needs to be both fusion and distance between text and interpreter. He also emphasises the non-subjective role of tradition in hermeneutics. The latter differs from Heidegger in that while he began his thinking in the framework of Kantian dualism he was able to transcend it in his later thought.

The later Wittgenstein was able to see that the Kantian distinction between facts and values, as applied to language, was unable to deal with the relationship between language and human life. He was also able to see that the emphasis on generalities in formal logic carried with it a '*contemptuous attitude towards the particular case*'. Horizons, op.cit., p 372. In the case of the former insight Wittgenstein was influenced by a paper given by Brouwer, in which he showed that disciplines such as mathematics, science and language should be understood as activities which took place in a social or historical context ( p 373). This led to his descriptive term '*language-game*', in preference to '*language*' as a system. Language can only take place in repeated human behaviour. For instance if people did not use the word '*red*' repeatedly, to refer to a particular colour, how could any individual ever apply the word '*red*' to that colour. Even with such subjective language as '*pain*', or '*peace*', the only way in which to verify



whether the word is being used correctly is to move outside of private experience. 'According to Wittgenstein, if sensations, feelings, states of mind, and the like were wholly or necessarily "private", language about them could never have arisen' ( p 381). Thiselton argues from this that biblical language, as for instance 'being redeemed' or 'being spoken to by God', are intelligible, 'not on the basis of private existential experience but on the basis of a public tradition of certain patterns of behaviour', as for instance in the Old Testament tradition ( p 382). He concludes that Wittgenstein has revealed two basic weaknesses in the Neo-Kantian thinking of Bultmann,

*First of all, a sharp dualism between fact and value cannot be sustained against the given ways in which language actually operates in life. Secondly, any attempt to reject the "this-worldly" dimension of the language of revelation and history raises insuperable problems for hermeneutics. For the very grammar of the concepts involved is embedded in a history of events and behaviour ( p 385).*

It is worth noting at this point that our rejection of the dualistic view of history, as a legacy of Kantian or post-Kantian philosophy, and as proposed by Bultmann, is supported by Niebuhr, Braaten, Thiselton, Pannenberg and Montgomery. Their view's come from widely differing schools of thought, and will be described as the chapter continues.

For an examination of hermeneutics against the more general background of the theory of language, one may note Thiselton's article on 'Language and Meaning in Religion' in NIDNTT, Vol 3, p 1123-1146.

77. Historical dualism has led to serious problems for dialectical theology. Niebuhr points out that the 'death resurrection complex' is fundamental to the N.T. He notes that despite their wide differences on many subjects, the vast majority of N.T. scholars concede that this is indeed the centre of N.T. thought. Further, the N.T. understands the resurrection as the validation of the crucifixion. Without the resurrection the cross loses its significance. It is impossible to interpret the crucifixion correctly without reckoning with the objective reality of the resurrection. However, the concept of *Geschichte* does not allow for the resurrection as an objective individual historical fact which is at all verifiable in terms of *Historie*. Dialectical theologians are therefore unwilling to predicate it as a truly historical event. This, in turn, tends to evacuate the crucifixion of its meaning. However such theologians are not prepared to dispense with the objective reality of the crucifixion. This leads to a curious paradox in their theology.

*'The paradox is that the excision of the resurrection tradition from the fabric of the Gospel history is followed by the disintegration of the entire historical sequence of the New Testament.'* Niebuhr op.cit., p14.

78. Arising out of these questions Harvey demonstrates that dialectical theology operates with two irreconcilable propositions. For Karl Barth and Paul Tillich and even for Rudolf Bultmann, Christian faith is built upon the once for all act of God in Jesus Christ. Within the realm of *Geschichte* Jesus Christ is the unique revelation of God. However, all these theologians believe that faith does not depend upon scientific history. It cannot therefore be based upon the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth. But these two propositions are irreconcilable. How can Jesus Christ not be the basis of faith in one sense (*Historie*) and nevertheless constitute the unique basis of faith in another sense (*Geschichte*)? After an incisive examination of dialectical theologians Harvey concludes that they have not been able to overcome this difficulty. Harvey, op.cit.

79. Carl E. Braaten regards historical dualism as a reaction to nineteenth century positivistic historiography.

*'The existentialist view of history arose as a response to nineteenth century positivistic historiography which searched the past for "brute facts", ordered them in causal sequence, and called that history.'* Braaten, op.cit., p 38. In answer to such historiography, existentialist theologians made a radical separation between scientific history and faith. A neutral zone was set up between the two which would be policed by the historian. In the area of faith a realm of history was set up (Geschichte) where meaning and significance would be found in events. In view of this radical separation between 'brute fact' and meaning, existentialist theologians have not been able to show how meaning can arise from the facts themselves. Bultmann has made a radical separation between history and kerygma. Does this not lead to the logical conclusion that the kerygma may not need an historical basis at all? This has led post-Bultmannian scholars to reject the Historie-Geschichte dichotomy as intolerable. Heinrich Ott has dealt with the matter by destroying one side of the dualism. According to him, there are no such things as brute facts. There are only interpretations. Gerhard Ebeling has taken the other side of the dualism and has sought to find a measure of continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygma.

80. It is interesting to notice that Harvey, though he cannot accept as factual any event *'as improbable as a Resurrection'*, similarly criticises this position on two counts:- Firstly, dialectical theology misuses the Protestant principle of justification. The reformation helped to shatter the medieval faith in ecclesiastical dogma. It therefore follows that the Protestant principle will always involve a shattering of the confidence which man places in human thought systems. Critical history is one such system. It promises to give to man an objective intellectual basis of faith. Such a faith is in fact faith in the flesh, faith in human wisdom. Dialectical theology equates scientific historical knowledge with the law, and faith must always liberate from the law. Faith therefore liberates man from his bondage to scientific history as a basis to faith. Such an idea has had great appeal.

*'Not only is the believer liberated from all concern lest the results of Biblical criticism threaten faith, but the act of criticism itself is regarded as being made possible by faith ...'*

However this idea is *'not without its own theological problems ...'* *'What is the content of faith if it can be said to be distinguishable from all belief? In what sense can Christian faith be called historical if no historical inquiry is relevant to its truth or falsity? If faith ... can be found in the question "Who am I?" what essential connection does it have with a unique act of God in Jesus Christ? ... Is it accessible to man as man quite apart from the alleged revelation in Christ to which Christendom has always clung?'* Harvey, op.cit., p 138.

81. M. Robinson, *The New Quest of the Historical Jesus*.
82. Niebuhr, op.cit., p74-88.
83. In order to know the historical Jesus one must see Him in relation with the Church. *'Jesus of Nazareth in abstraction from the Church is no longer Jesus Christ, (the object of historical knowledge).'* It was the great failure of the quest for the historical Jesus that it thought it possible to know Jesus in history apart from the Church. Niebuhr, op.cit., p89-96.
84. This means that historical cognition is highly personal. History can only be known by a subject who internalises it and therefore experiences it. According to August-

time, memory is indispensable for our existence. In his concept of time he understands the present as something that depends upon the past in memory, and the future in anticipation. We cannot therefore subject Jesus to our present. Niebuhr, *op.cit.*, p96-100 .

85. Niebuhr, *op.cit.*, p 100-104.

86. Niebuhr, *op.cit.*, p 105-128, 162-171.

87. The concept of nature with which modern theology often operates may be traced to Platonic, Cartesian and Kantian philosophy. Plato regarded the empirically given with low esteem. In his mind, that which was empirical or immediate was transitory and not open to conceptualisation. His influence can be traced in various theological systems. Soren Kierkegaard saw nature as having only immediate, non-conceptual existence. Bultmann equates nature with '*this age*' or '*the flesh*' which is transitory and subject to death. Brunner rejects the possibility of accepting the resurrection as an event of immediate experience. Niebuhr believes that the Platonic view of nature is inappropriate to proper historical method. Descartes is known for his dualistic separation between nature and spirit. He regarded the former mechanistically and tended to completely spiritualise Christ. The conclusion which follows from such an idea is that the redemption of the natural order is impossible. Descartes' influence can be traced particularly in the theology of Albrecht Ritschl who could not accept the activity of God in history and understood the kingdom of God as something which transcended the historical-natural continuum. A similar dualism can be found in Kant's distinction between experiential and practical reason. According to Kant, the '*criterion for the idea of God is it's non-conceptuality.*' This means that God cannot be understood to act in the natural order. Kant's influence can be found particularly in the theology of Rudolf Bultmann. These views of nature, Niebuhr discusses under the broad category of the naturalisation of history, although he also shows that precisely the opposite tendency can be traced in philosophical thought about nature. Niebuhr, *op.cit.*, p 162-171.

88. David Hume suggests that '*nature*' as we understand it, may be simply a habit of mind, a mere convention or a principal of association. Emile Durkheim has taken this further and suggested that nature as we understand it, may simply be the product of the collective consciousness of society in its experience of itself. Concepts of causation will therefore change from one society to another. R.G. Collingwood has advocated the idea that nature itself has a history i.e. it has a history of interpretations and is consequently not self-explanatory. The very concept of nature depends upon history. He suggests that the second law of thermodynamics can be traced to the primitive idea of the decline from the Golden Age. Kant sought to bring a balance to this general emphasis by suggesting that the human concept of nature arises out of a synthesis between human cognition and the noumenal world; but he made the mistake of identifying such a concept with an a priori category of the mind. This led to a confusion of Newtonian physics with a priori forms of cognition, and no account was taken of changes in scientific models of nature. A.N.Whitehead has suggested that laws are not static concepts. They change from age to age and nature itself is to be regarded as an organism rather than a machine. Niebuhr, *op.cit.*

89. Regarding scientific laws, Niebuhr points out that these are really '*tools for the detection of the familiar*'. They are firstly highly abstract; they are incapable of comprehending individual events and in this sense, are inferior, and therefore not appropriate to historical reason. Secondly, they have an historical genesis; they are human attempts to interpret reality and must inevitably be subject to constant revision. In short, '*these laws, having to do with aspects of events, are drawn from highly limited and abstracted or artificially defined areas of human experience, and are formulated for particular purposes.*' Niebuhr, *op.cit.*, p 170 .

90. In discussing the relationship of the historical Jesus to the present, Niebuhr believes three things ought to be held together; namely the Church, the criticism of the Church concerning its past, and the past which it criticises.
91. Niebuhr, *op.cit.*, p 136-161.
92. Niebuhr, *op.cit.*, p 135-136.
93. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, p 1-68.
94. This philosophy, which emanated from the 'Vienna school' led by Ludwig Wittgenstein may be defined as '*an analysis of the logical structure of language as revealed in assertive propositions*'. A statement could only be regarded as scientifically meaningful if it was possible to say what state of affairs would exist for the purpose of its verification. These philosophers accordingly concluded that only scientific, as opposed to metaphysical (or religious) propositions, could be meaningful because they alone were subject to verification. According to the earlier Wittgenstein assertions about 'God' were meaningless because there was no evidence of God in the world which was open to verification. Theology was left with two possible escape routes; it could either assert that religious statements were the reflection of a certain attitude on the part of the subject rather than reality itself, or it could critically examine logical positivism. While dialectical theology tended to opt for the former, Pannenberg certainly takes the latter alternative. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, *op.cit.*
95. The first sign of weakness in the philosophy of logical positivism came with Karl Popper's attack upon it, from within the camp as it were. The basis of this philosopher's view of scientific propositions was the concept of inductive method proper to science. By the method of induction, experimental data are used to make generalisations or '*laws*' of science. Logically, a law can only be demonstrated by this method if every possible case is included. This is impossible because science must operate with a limited number of observations. Clearly, science does not operate by pure induction. The opposite of induction is deduction, i.e. models or laws are derived from a priori assumption. This method is similarly inappropriate to science. However, it is noted by Pannenberg that in the view of the philosophy of science, dialectical theology, by retreating to an area of commitment, has in fact retreated into the realm of a priori, deductive logic. Against both induction and deduction, Popper has shown that scientific method may more properly be described as an interrelation between data and hypothesis. Neither precedes the other absolutely in time (i.e. data-induction, hypothesis-deduction). In this view, hypotheses are not tested by verification but may be refuted through falsification. This still left a radical cleavage between scientific and metaphysical (or religious) statements. In his view, for a proposition to be meaningful it must be;
  - (a) open to falsification, and
  - (b) one must be able to make predictions from the proposition which can be tested for falsification.
 Since metaphysical statements are open to neither condition, they must be relegated to a non-scientific area. Popper was prepared to include history within truly scientific method because he believed history dealt with universal laws which could be falsified.
96. Popper may be criticised on three counts. Firstly, in the realm of philosophy it has become clear that the principle of falsification itself is not self-evident. It has to operate with '*basic propositions*' or '*protocol propositions*'. These amount to conventions which simply have to be assumed. The principle of falsification therefore depends upon an a priori assumption of faith. This means that scientific and metaphysical statement cannot be so easily divided. Secondly, it has become clear that science does not even operate in practice by the principle of falsification. T.S. Kuhn has shown that an hypothesis is not usually rejected because it has

been falsified, but because a better 'paradigm' has been found. Thirdly, Popper's view of history is not acceptable. History does not deal with generalisations, but rather with a continual series of individual and unrepeatable events. This means that Popper's principle of falsification is not appropriate to historical method.

97. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, op.cit.

Even in science, the idea of testing generalisations through repeatable experiments is questionable. Can we really say that each scientific experiment is repeatable? Is not each scientific datum also a unique and unrepeatable event? To answer that it is part of a typical occurrence, one must assume that the type exists in the first place. T.S. Kuhn has shown that scientific laws are not based upon the testing of repeatable events, but are really tested by the ability of the different theories to explain the evidence at hand. Consequently, one cannot distinguish clearly between historical and scientific method. Pannenberg concludes;

*it appears from this that the ability to draw together and make sense of the available material is the principle criterion in the testing of scientific as well as of historical hypotheses' (p60). 'All that can be required of historical hypotheses in the interest of testability and refutability is the greatest possible clarity in construction, so that a particular historical reconstruction with its main assumption and selection of evidence can be clearly distinguishable from alternative hypothesis' (p67).*

98. The revelation of God in the fate of Jesus did not drop from heaven, but came at the end of the history of Israel. It came to people who had as a basic presupposition the O.T. knowledge of God. In order to proclaim Christ to the world therefore we need to begin with some common ground on the basis of the presupposition, namely, a knowledge of God. This link is made possible through a study of the history of religions in which the history of Israel is included. From the history of Israel and through a philosophy of history which is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we may meaningfully proclaim Christ to the world.

99. God, by definition, is the Lord of the whole of reality. *'The divinity of God can only be seen in relation to the whole of reality.'* Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, Vol.1, op.cit., p 24. History rather than speculative philosophy, reveals reality as a whole. Reality is marked by 'historicality'; therefore, the divinity of God can only be seen in relation to the *'whole of reality understood as history.'* *'This means that we need to think of universal history in order to understand God's revelation of himself.'* We may never be able to grasp the whole of history, as finite beings, but it is indispensable that we think at least in these terms, because even a single event can only be understood against the background of world history. *'Without world history there is no meaning to history.'* (p 69). A concept of universal history is therefore an inescapable premise for all historiography. This has been recognised by secular historians.

100. The idea of world history has its origin in the Judaeo-Christian philosophy of history. In the prophetic tradition of Israel, which developed into the apocalyptic view, history was for the first time conceived of as a process of unique and unrepeatable events. If this basis is removed, i.e. if man is placed in the centre of history instead of God, both the meaning of individual, continuous events and an

understanding of continuity in history are lost. Such a philosophy of world history does not identify God with the process of history itself, or the infinite with the finite. Rather there is a correlation between the infinite and the finite. History is not an immanence over against a transcendence. These two cannot be set in an antithesis. This means that the infinite can be revealed in the finite. *'Only because the infinite reality, which as personal can be called God; is present and active in the history of the finite, can one speak of a revelation of God in history.'* Pannenberg in *Theology as History, New Frontiers in Theology*, ed. J.M. Robinson and J.B. Cobb, p 253.

101. Against the cyclical view of history in the Orient, the tradition of Israel developed a linear view of history from the experience of God's successive acts in history through promise and fulfilment. Through His mighty acts, for instance the Exodus and the gift to Israel of the promised land, the God of Israel proved His deity to His people ( Deut. 4.37-40; 4.7-11). In such events He showed Himself to be their God. With the event of the exile, prophetic tradition changed its orientation from the past acts of God to the future. Out of this future orientation grew the apocalyptic hope of the final saving act of God in history. This eschatological event would be open to all nations. All flesh would see the glory of God (Isa. 40.5). In this way the deity of God would be finally revealed. This led to the understanding that the acts of God prior to the end were not the full revelation of His deity. *'It is not so much the course of history as it is the end of history, that is at one with the essence of God.'* Robinson & Cobb, op.cit., p 113.
102. The O.T. did not reveal God in His fullness because the eschaton did not occur. However, in the life and ministry and particularly in the resurrection of Jesus, that which was only possible at the end of history occurred in the present. The end was proleptically revealed in Jesus. His message of the nearness, and indeed presence of the eschaton, was vindicated by His resurrection. In the apocalyptic expectation the general resurrection would take place at the end of history. But in Christ's resurrection, that resurrection had already dawned. God had already revealed His full deity in Jesus, and Jesus must be seen as the final revelation of God.
103. The message of Jesus and the vindication of that message in the resurrection is not to be regarded as an isolated event which miraculously occurred. Christ's message was given in the tradition of the O.T. apocalyptic and eschatological hope. It is to be understood as the fulfilment of the history of the transmission of the tradition of Israel's faith.

Pannenberg's understanding of the relationship between the O.T. prophetic hope and the event of revelation in Jesus of Nazareth is intimately linked to his use of a particular historical method, namely the histories of the transmission of traditions. He relies here upon the O.T. theology of Von Rad, who pioneered the proper use of this method. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, Vol.1, op.cit., p 81-95. Kerygma theology distinguished between history as the result of the historical critical method, and history as *Heilsgechichte*. In von Rad's method this dualism is eradicated. For von Rad, Old Testament theology can only be understood in terms of Israel's understanding of her history. This has led critics to object that he thereby escapes from the 'real' history of Israel as conceived by historical critical research. But in reply to this, it is not possible to choose between the 'real' history of Israel and the Israelite view of that history. This is an impossible dichotomy because the traditions of Israel's faith are themselves *'inexpugnable moments of the historical process itself'*. The historical process is itself a process of the transmission of tradition. There can be no 'outer' (historical critical) and 'inner' (kerygmatic) history of Israel. Tradition in its transmission is the very stuff of history. The study of the transmission, trans-

formation, correction and disappearance of tradition is part of the critical method. One cannot therefore separate critical method from Kerygmatic traditions.

*History is never made up of brute facts. As human history its occurrence is always interwoven with understanding, in hope and memory and the transformations of understanding are themselves events of history. This history is always also the history of the transmission of traditions, and even the natural events which effect the history of a people do not have their meaning outside of their positive or negative relationship to the traditions and expectations in which the men of that history live. . . Pannenberg, in Robinson & Cobb, op.cit., p 258 note 67 and p 256-266 .*

Pannenberg's use of this principle is to be distinguished from its usual use. As it is usually understood, *Formgeschichte* enquires only about the *history of the literary and oral material*. In his view, this principle must be used against a broader philosophy of history which seeks to enquire about the whole of reality. In his use the method therefore includes the actions of the participating individuals as part of the tradition.

104. Does this mean then that in Pannenberg's view the 'event' which Israel saw as God's act can truly be accepted as such? Can historical method include God's acts? The answer to this question is twofold. Firstly, the proper use of the historical method must be distinguished from the understanding of that method as defined by Ernst Troeltsch. This means that the principle of analogy is re-defined so that in principle history cannot rule out God's acts. Secondly, the history of the transmission of Israel's traditions culminated in, and included the life and resurrection of Jesus. But this one event, tied as it is to the end of history, is part of world history which, as the whole of reality, can be the revelation of God. Thus, looking back at the history of the transmission of Israel's traditions from the vantage point of the resurrection, we can see God's acts in O.T. history.
105. The understanding of history as the history of the transmission of traditions unites together events and meaning. This is due to the fact that in this method, critical history and interpreted history (i.e. in the tradition of faith) are fused together. Critical history and Kerygmatic history can no longer be distinguished. This unity of event and meaning is particularly evident in the O.T. where the prophetic word preceeded the event which fulfilled it. When the event occurred it was already interpreted. It spoke for itself. Pannenberg stresses this point in regard to the resurrection. The belief in the general resurrection at the end of the world was a strong element in Jewish apocalyptic. Jesus and His disciples shared this understanding. When Jesus was raised the event took place in a particular context, where its meaning and significance had already been defined. Paul did not need an audition with the resurrected Christ to understand the Gospel. He needed merely to experience the event and the meaning became plain. The resurrection, far from being an event only for those who see its meaning by faith, is a fact which bears with it its own meaning. The 'Kerygmatic' view of the resurrection in dialectical theology is therefore mistaken. The unity of event and meaning in history has been fragmented due to Kantian philosophy, where scientific events were separated from the realm of ethical significance, and due to positivistic history, where events were understood as brute facts.

106. This unity of fact and meaning has vital implications for the relationship between faith and reason. If the events speak for themselves, then their meaning is public. The unbeliever can see as the believer; such 'events' do not need a prior understanding of faith in order for them to be perceived. *'Faith is not something like a compensation of subjective conviction to make up for defective knowledge'*. Pannenberg, Basic Questions, Vol.1,op.cit., p 65 . This would amount to an irrational leap. Faith is grounded on the demonstration of historical fact. This means that we must have a reasonable belief in the historicity of the facts through historical critical research if we are to take a step in faith. But, on the basis of this knowledge, we do then commit ourselves in trust to God. Such faith will always contain an element of risk because the eschatological tension between the proleptic fulfilment and the final revelation of God at the end of history is always present. This dependence of the believer upon the result of critical history does not mean that *'the ground of faith is....relegated to the status of a more or less arbitrary hypothesis of an individual teacher'*, but rather it shares in the *'general feeling of historical reliability that is created by the mark of scientific research.'* Pannenberg, Basic Questions Vol.1.op.cit., p 56-57 . Pannenberg further appeals to the Lutheran principle of the clarity of scripture as support for his idea of the union of fact and meaning. In addition, he mentions that any view of history which sees God's acts only in the area of Heilsgeschichte denies the truth of the incarnation.
107. a) *'If Jesus has been raised, then the end of the world has begun'*. This understanding of the event is evident from the idea of Christ as the first fruits of the general resurrection in Pauline theology, and from the idea of the Spirit's presence as the presence of the eschatological reality amongst the disciples.
- b) *'If Jesus has been raised, this for Jesus can only mean that God Himself has confirmed the pre-Easter activity of Jesus.'* This is indicated by the speeches in Acts where the resurrection is so defined and from the definition of the resurrection as a vindication in the Spirit (1 Tim.3.16).
- c) *'Through His resurrection from the dead Jesus moved so close to the Son of man that the insight became obvious. The Son of Man is none other than the man Jesus who will come again.'* The hope of the eschatological coming of Christ is therefore inseparable from the belief in his first coming as the revealer of God.
- d) *'If Jesus, having been raised from the dead, is ascended to God, and if thereby the end of the world has begun, then God is ultimately revealed in Jesus'*.

From the eschatological view of Jesus as the final revelation of God, the transition of the tradition to the Syrian environment would have developed the view of Jesus as the epiphany of God. The transition of the tradition to the Hellenistic environment would then have developed the understanding of Jesus as the Incarnation of God and thus as himself partaking of the essence of God.

- e) *'The transition to the Gentile mission is motivated by the eschatological resurrection of Jesus as the resurrection of the crucified one.'*

The O.T. eschatological hope included the belief that at the end all nations would participate in God's salvation. Since the end had now occurred in Jesus, his salvation must therefore be sent to all nations. The bondage of the law was removed by Paul's understanding of the cross as the bearing of the curse of the law.

- f) *'Particularly the last consequence throws light on the relationship between the appearances of the resurrected Jesus and the words spoken by Him. What the early Christian tradition transmitted as the words of the risen Jesus is to be understood in terms of its content as the explication of the significance inherent in the resurrection itself.'* Pannenberg, Jesus, God and Man, op.cit., p 66-73.



In this way, Pannenberg refers to the unity between event and meaning which we have already referred to.

108. His first point is to show that the phrase '*resurrection from the dead*' is a metaphor which was a standard phrase in apocalyptic language to describe an event which is beyond normal human comprehension. The phrase does not refer to the resuscitation of a dead corpse, or the bringing back to life of dead men which is common in ancient legends: Paul's concept of a '*spiritual body*' borrowed from apocalyptic terminology refers to a complete transformation into a realm of existence beyond the grave. Historical continuity is indicated by the fact that it is nevertheless the same body, which died in space and time, which is transformed. His second point is to show that, in terms of modern anthropology
- a) human nature is fundamentally in quest for the meaning of this life in the life after death, and
  - b) the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul in distinction from the body is no longer conceivable. The modern view is essentially one of the wholeness of man. Modern anthropology and Jewish apocalyptic therefore stand on the same ground. Pannenberg, *Jesus, God and Man*, op.cit., p 74-88.

109. His argument here is twofold. Firstly, he examines the traditions themselves. He shows that the tradition of the empty tomb is not necessarily very late, and that, as a tradition, it seems to have developed independently. This tends to corroborate the other traditions. The appearances to Paul and the remainder of the apostles must be taken together. Here he shows that all attempts to explain these accounts as subjective visions in any sense have failed. The only satisfactory answer is to accept the objective reality of the resurrected Christ. Secondly, he deals with the possible objections to this tradition from the vantage point of science and historical method. Regarding the former he answers.

*Firstly only a part of the laws of nature are ever known. Further, in a world that as a whole represents a singular, irreversible process, an individual event is never completely determined by natural laws....From another perspective, everything that happens is contingent. Therefore natural science...must...declare its own inability to make definite judgement about the possibility or impossibility of an individual event, regardless of how certainly it is able, at least in principle, to measure the probability of an event's occurrence.* Pannenberg, *Jesus, God and Man*, op.cit., p 98.

Regarding the latter he says:

*As long as historiography does not begin dogmatically with a narrow concept of reality according to which "dead men do not rise" it is not clear why historiography should not in principle be able to speak about Jesus' resurrection as the explanation that is best established of such events as the disciples' experiences of the appearances and the discovery of the empty tomb, p 109.*

110. The criterion of verifiability has been helpful in distinguishing between tautological and synthetic propositions. Propositions in mathematics and deductive logic give no information about the empirical world but merely follow *a priori* assumptions, proper to their deductive system. They are therefore tautological. Synthetic assumptions, on the contrary, affirm something about the real world which can be verified or falsified. The former type of propositions are useful in mathematical and deductive logic, but may otherwise be termed '*trivial*'. '*Synthetic sentences*' on the other hand, may be termed '*informative*'. A third type of proposition is neither tautological nor synthetic, but in fact meaningless. For instance, a sentence from F.H. Bradley such as this: '*the absolute enters into, but is itself incapable of evolution or progress*' cannot be verified and does not deduce anything from deductive logic. It is therefore meaningless. John Warwick Montgomery, *Crisis in Lutheran Theology*, Vol.1. p 26. Montgomery is aware of the fact that attempts have been made to destroy the verification criterion. He believes though that A.J. Ayer has effectively answered the objections by showing that the criterion, though neither tautological nor synthetic, is not meaningless because it operates as a definition.

Montgomery further believes that despite the criticisms, '*The verification principle still stands as the best available map through the forest of truth-claims*,' (p 27, note 30).

The third category (meaningless propositions) may seem to destroy metaphysics. However, it is not meant to prevent all discussions of non-verifiable matters. Rather, in the specific area of truth-claims and of verification these principles have become helpful. Montgomery states that;

*Whatever the supposed advantages of metaphysical or theological dualism, and however praiseworthy the motives leading to such dualism, their result is analytically meaningless. Why? Because by definition insofar as any statement about the "Absolute" or "God" does not touch the world of human experience to that extent it cannot be verified in any sensible way, (p30).*

Much the same criticisms may be levelled against the '*being*' statements of existentialism. This does not mean that existentialistic statements are ruled out altogether. Montgomery advocates the necessity of Christian existentialism in a secondary sense. However, in terms of the basis of faith and the fundamental truth-claims of any theological system, such statements are inappropriate. Once the ground of faith has been established, they are quite acceptable if they are built upon a ground which has been objectively verified as a truth claim. The verification principle has highlighted what Montgomery believes to be the basic weakness of existentialistic thought, namely, its belief that the subject-object distinction must be overcome. Existentialists have taken this course in the belief that modern scientific method has similarly accepted the involvement of the subject in the scientific enterprise. But this is not exactly the case. Though all thought inevitably does involve the subject, we must,

*not obscure the fact that meaningful thought absolutely requires the subject-object distinction...If in any investigation - whether in science or in theology - the observer loses the distinction between himself and his subject matter, the result is*

*complete chaos: not a "transcending of the subject-object barrier", but a necessary fall into pure subjectivity', p 32.*

111. He notes that there are basically four methods of arriving at truth: common sense, authority, intuition and the empirical or scientific method. The first is in fact a mixture of the other three, and completely uncritical. *'The chief fallacy in the authoritarian method lies in the fact that it begs to question how did the given authority acquire the truth it holds in the first place?'* J.W. Montgomery, *The Shape of the Past, A Christian Response to Secular Philosophies of History*, p 265. The intuitive approach is used by mystics and rational philosophers (in the Kantian tradition) but suffers from its a priori subjectivity and unverifiability. Empirical or scientific method

*is a process which consists of; 1) the investigation of the Universe by observation, 2) the verification of these observations by others, 3) the drawing of generalisations (hypotheses) from these verified observations, 4) the verification of these hypotheses by others etc. etc., p 258.*

This method does not suffer from the problem of a priori unverifiability and is consequently the only valid approach to truth claims. Even empirical method, it is true, does operate with some presuppositions, but such a prioris are *'few, self evident, and more generally agreed upon than those of any other system.'* (p 265-266). They are not substantive presuppositions about the world, but rather heuristic, methodological presuppositions, that permit us to discover what the world is like. *'They are in fact "unavoidably necessary" in all of our endeavours to distinguish synthetic truth from falsity.'* John Warwick Montgomery, *Where is History Going?* p 179. Montgomery quotes three such presuppositions mentioned by Edward J. Carnell. Firstly, epistemologically, one must assume that knowledge is possible. Secondly, the assumption of the regularity of the universe is a metaphysical presupposition. Thirdly, the will-to-truth as opposed to error is an ethical assumption. Montgomery, *Shape, op.cit.*, p 266.

112. How does empirical method operate? How are scientific theories and hypotheses formulated? *'Popper uses Wittgenstein's analogy of a net, "Theories are nets cast to catch what we call the world; to rationalise, to explain and to master it. We endeavour to make the mesh ever finer and finer.'* Montgomery, *Suicide, op.cit.*, p 272. The net or model is cast to give a *'conceptual fabric'* with *'epistemological vividness'*. An illustration of this method is found in the discovery of the structure of the DNA molecule by James Watson and Francis Crick. From previous research, they were convinced that the genetic structure could only exist in two spirals arranged in a certain way. In an attempt to discover this structure they spent a great deal of time experimenting with various possibilities, but to no avail. Then one night, after much fruitless labour, Crick had a *'revelation'*, as it were. In an intuitive flash he perceived how they should be arranged. They immediately tested this mental construction by mentally relating it to all the requirements, and concluded that it must be true. Sometime later actual experimentation substantiated their discovery.

113. Scientific theories are not the result of either pure induction or deduction. There are in fact no logical rules. Induction and deduction are complementary to each other. According to Max Black, we should *'think of science as a condescence, a growing together of variable, interacting, mutually reinforcing factors, contributing to a development organic in character'*. This interrelation of imagination and

logic with data and hypotheses may be termed abduction or retroduction. Where deduction proves what must be, and induction would demonstrate what actually is, abduction suggests what may be. In other words it operates with probabilities.

This leads to the connection between scientific and theological verification.

*The theological theorist...will endeavour to formulate conceptual...“networks” of ideas, capable of rendering his data intelligible. He will employ “models” to achieve epistemological vividness. He will utilise all three types of inference (inductive, deductive, retroductive) in his theory making, but again, like the scientist, he will find himself most usually dependent upon the imaginative operation of retroduction. Montgomery, Suicide,op.cit., p 277.*

114. The success of any theory will depend not so much on its ability to predict, but upon the ability to fit the facts. It is true that at a later stage the theologian differs from the scientist, because he becomes involved with his object of study whereas the scientist can never 'get inside' his subject matter. A vital point for Montgomery is that on the level of verification, the theologian must likewise stand outside his data. This leads to the vital question, what constitutes his data? What is the object of his study? Four answers have been given to this question: Reason, The Church, Christian Experience and Scriptural Revelation. Montgomery believes that the fourth is the only valid object of theological investigation because it alone is open to public verification. Scriptural revelation is a 'given', something which is outside of the subject who approaches it. Here again, a vital point for Montgomery is that 'Scriptural revelation' should in the beginning be defined as the N.T. documents viewed as any other documents without reference to their inspiration. In other words, the object of theological investigation on the level of the verification of a truth-claim is the documented witness of the N.T. to historical events. One cannot presume the inspiration of the N.T. This would amount to an a priori and unverifiable assumption. One must begin with the 'footprints of the divine' in the realm of empirical observation i.e. in the phenomenal realm. The 'empirical investigation of objective phenomena is the only possibility...for obtaining religious truth' and therefore, 'knowledge of the divine stands or falls on the question of whether a divine revelation' of this nature 'exists'. Montgomery, Shape,op.cit., p 287. This is precisely the claim of the Incarnation, that God has revealed Himself in man's empirical world,i.e.in history. Christian theology depends completely upon the verifiability of historical facts.
115. Montgomery, Shape,op.cit., p 375-382.
116. Firstly, Montgomery believes that it is possible to write objective history. What he means by this must be carefully defined and distinguished from other views of objectivity. He does not mean by the term 'objective' that history can be free of value judgements. One of his fundamental points is that, in selecting data, the historian cannot avoid 'sovereign decision' i.e.he must inevitably bring some criterion from his own world view into his selection of data. History without selection amounts to chronicle. Montgomery, Shape,op.cit., p 13-17. He accepts rather the definition of objectivity given by J.W.N.Watkins that;

*the objective character of a scientific theory is not a function of its author's temperament and mentality, but of its criticisability. Thus, for me, the question "How objective can history be?" boils down to the question "To what extent is a systematic reconstruction exposed to criticism?"* Montgomery, *Where to?* op.cit., p 194-195.

Montgomery believes that the Dilthey tradition in historiography has overreacted to nineteenth century positivism and has radically subjectivised historiography. The same criticism may be applied to the Bultmannian application of Dilthey's philosophy.

*In reacting against historicistic "life of Jesus" research, post-liberal theology never saw that the real trouble lay, not with the heuristic employment of inductive technique based upon the subject-object distinction, but with the humanistic metaphysics of the liberal researchers,* p 194 .

117.

Montgomery holds that the facts of history carry their own meaning. Again, this statement needs careful definition. It does not mean that the historian becomes a passive observer, and that the interpretations somehow ride 'piggy -back' on the events. Montgomery's view of 'sovereign decision' dispels such a possibility. For instance, if we take the example of the extermination of six million Jews in Germany, we may have one interpretation according to which this may be explained as the actions of a lunatic who was insanely anti-Semitic; or we may say that Hitler, in his love for the Jews and his belief in life after death, decided to send them to the world of bliss as soon as possible. Clearly, one interpretation is better than the other, and there is some necessary link between the events and their interpretation.

*Significance may arise from various sources, but significance is not imputed by the mind. The mind properly only recognises the significance which the event "out there" bears. Significance arises from the nature of the event.'* Paul D.Feinberg, *History: Public or Private? A Defence of John Warwick Montgomery's Philosophy of History*, p 325-331 reprinted in *Shape*, op.cit., p 375-382, see p 378.

In holding this view, Montgomery has been influenced again by Wittgenstein. In his analysis of words Wittgenstein believed that meanings are public, not private. Since they are public there are also public criteria for their application.

118

In discussing the constructionist view of history, Paul Feinberg defines the boundaries of Montgomery's view;

*If Nash means by constructionist philosophy of history that "the past cannot be observed directly", and that "all knowledge of the past is inferential and indirect", and, if he means that the reconstructions of the past are subject to objective, empirical criteria for their validity, then Nash and Montgomery are in substantive agreement. But if he means that "the historian remakes the past in his own image" and that "the Historian constructs or creates parts of the past", and if this is to be construed as a construction in accord with his own a priori Weltanschauung, then....Nash's view of history must be avoided at all costs. Feinberg, op.cit., p 380.*

The point here is that if history is really the product of the historian's mind more than the reconstruction of the past itself, then one must of necessity be sceptical about any historical reconstruction. But such a view is impossible to live with, because knowledge of the past is so similar to knowledge of the present. The man who 'doubts the possibility of correct historical evidence and tradition' cannot at the same time accept his own inferential knowledge of present circumstances that are not directly the result of his own observations. *'He cannot limit his doubt to his historical criticism, but is required to let it operate on his own life.'* *'A general philosophical scepticism is an intellectual game, but one cannot live by it.'* Montgomery, Shape, op.cit., p 139-140.

119.

Montgomery, Where to? op.cit., p 30.

The common problem reflected in all these issues is the fact that no historian can *'sit in a house by the side of the road, and watch history pass by.'* Due to the human situation, an absolute historical perspective is impossible. In order to write any history at all, he must make his own *'sovereign decision'* for some world view. However, he is unable to demonstrate the ethical basis of any such world view.

Secular historiography is thus faced with a need which it cannot answer. This answer is however, indispensable. Montgomery is here again influenced by Wittgenstein;

*In his remarkable Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus Wittgenstein effectively argued that "the sense of the world must lie outside the world", that is, man never has sufficient perspective from within the world situation to build an eternal structure of truth and value....As Wittgenstein put it... "If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case....Ethics is transcendental".* Montgomery, Suicide, op.cit., p 365-366.

120. Montgomery, *Shape*, op.cit., p 127-121 and *Where to?* op.cit., p 118-140.

Montgomery analyses particularly the last years of Tillich's thought, and singles out two elements which relate especially to his view of history. Firstly, Tillich had an ontological commitment, and a concern for the elimination of all forms of idolatry. Such idolatry for him was the identification of Absolute being with anything in the phenomenal world. Thus he could say, regarding the unconditional claim of the divine: *'That this claim can be grounded in a finite, historical reality is the root of all heteronomy and all demonism.'* Montgomery, *Where to?* op.cit., p 125.

121. This means that Tillich accepted completely Lessing's argument against historical certainty, and means that the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ and the events of his death and resurrection can never be more than symbols of ultimate reality. Meaning is not found in historical events, or in historical progression; rather, *'fulfilment is going on in every moment here and now, beyond history, not some time in the future, but here and now above ourselves.'* This expresses Tillich's theme of the 'eternal now'. *Where to?* op.cit., p 130.

122. Just as the Reformers condemned mediaeval Romanism for *'heteronomously absolutising the visible Church'*, so we must *'reject all historical identifications of the Absolute with religious phenomena.'* Montgomery, *Where to?* op.cit., p 126.

123. Once Tillich had absolutised the principle of justification to have been consistent, he should have applied this principle to the content of his view of 'Being'. To preserve his concept of 'Being' from the axe of this principle, he would have had to remove all content from it, because any content which is brought into it by man must amount to an *'anthropomorphic contamination'*. To have done this, however, would have presented other problems. This would have drained away all substantive knowledge. He would have ended merely saying that *'there is what there is'*. Montgomery, *Where to?* op.cit., p 134.

124. *Tillich consistently refuses to face the verification question. In the spirit of such metaphysical philosophers of history as Kant and Hegel, he does not see that the attempt to produce a philosophy of maximum generality results in a formal Weltanschauung that says nothing because it says everything... Tillich missed the vital insight offered by contemporary analytical philosophy in its distinction between analytic...and synthetic... statements; only the latter, based on experimental investigation of the world, can provide substantive knowledge of reality'. Montgomery, Where to? op.cit., p 136-137.*

125. Montgomery, *Where to?* op.cit., p 100-117.

126. To this Montgomery replies;

*In the Scripture and in the writings of the Reformers one finds not a negative but a positive attitude to history, based upon the central conviction that total human history lies in the hands of God. Montgomery, Where to? op.cit., p 102.*

127. This historical dualism is tied to his interpretation of Anselm, where the *'proof of faith by faith...was already established in itself without proof.'* In line with this he viewed theology as an autonomous realm with no bridge to other realms of human knowledge. His motivation for this seems to have been his fear of attack from the *'steadily growing "post-Christian" forces of his day.'* Montgomery, *Where to?* op.cit., p 109.
128. Montgomery, *Where to?* op.cit., p 141-181.
129. Fundamentally, one may begin with either a humanistic or a Theocentric starting point: because, as Clark often repeats, *'There has been no proof but there is choice.'* Neither starting point can be proved, so one must choose which one is the best. In his view, the absolute presupposition of orthodox Calvinism and its view of God is the only starting point which can result in a coherent picture of history and reality in general. This axiom of revelation then operates as a type of hypothesis which can be tested in terms of its coherency, and *'the higher coherence level of the Christian world-view offers a sound and rational ground for affirming the axiom of revelation'*. This amounts to an a priori starting point which Clark considers fundamental to all thinking. *'Instead of beginning with the facts and later discovering God, unless a thinker begins with God he can never end with God, or get the facts either'*, Montgomery, *Where to?* op.cit., p 161.

The implication of this idea is that, without the axiom of revelation, no objective knowledge is possible.

130. Montgomery, *Where to?* op.cit., p 175.
131. Montgomery, *Shape*, op.cit., p 138.
132. Montgomery, *Shape*, op.cit., p 138-139.

1. *On the basis of accepted principles of textual and historical analysis the Gospel records are found to be trustworthy documents, primary source evidence for the life of Christ.*

2. *In these records Jesus exercises divine prerogatives and claims to be God in human flesh and He rests His claims on His forthcoming resurrection.*

3. *In all four Gospels, Christ's bodily resurrection is described in minute detail; Christ's resurrection evidences his deity.*

Montgomery bases his argument here upon the work of Ethelbert Stauffer in *Jesus and His Story* (p 169-170, 235-238) and various other contemporary apologetic arguments for the historicity of the resurrection.

4. *The fact of the resurrection cannot be discounted on a priori philosophical grounds - miracles are impossible only if one so defines them - but such definition rules out proper historical investigation.*



At another point Montgomery critically examines Hume's position on miracles (p 288-292). He bases his view of the 'openness' of history again upon Stauffer and in addition, the apologetic work of Edward John Carnell.

5. *If Christ is God, then he speaks the truth concerning the absolute divine authority of the Old Testament, and of the soon-to-be-written New Testament concerning His death for the sins of the world, and concerning the nature of man and of history.*

6. *It follows from the preceding that all Biblical assertions bearing on philosophy of history are to be regarded as revealed truth, and that all human attempts at historical interpretation are to be judged for truth-value on the basis of harmony with Scriptural revelation...*

133. Montgomery, Shape, op.cit., p 139-140.

134. He states;

*the initial establishment of Jesus' divine authority is accomplished by analysing the New Testament documents, with their primary accounts of His resurrection, as nothing more than historical records. Having done this (note the logical priority), we discover that one of the chief implications of finding a divine Christ in these documents is that the documents themselves...are declared to be the very word of God. Montgomery, Where to? op.cit., p 181 note 56.*

135. They are his answer to the relativistic dilemma of secular historiography. They are divided into four groups. Montgomery, Shape, op.cit., p 145-152.

(a) Metaphysical principles;

1. *The entire historical process is meaningful, for it is the result of God's creative activity and has been hallowed by God's appearance in human flesh in the person of Christ and by his death for the sins of the whole world.*

2. *The decisive event ("Kairos") in the history of mankind is the act of God in Jesus Christ, and the ultimate criterion of historical significance for other events ("Kairos") - all of which are unique - lies in their relation to the Christ-act.*

3. *Final judgement on the historical process rests in the hands of God, not of man, and*

*will be made manifest on the last day, when all history is brought to a close with the return of Christ.*

(b) Ethical principles:

*4. There exists in the universe an absolute moral law (revealed in the Holy Scriptures and fulfilled in Christ) and an absolute ethical ideal (the Agape-love of God incarnated in Christ).*

*5. Truth in the most real sense is to be identified with personality, not with impersonal factors or forces.*

(c) Anthropological principles:

*6. Human nature is constant.*

*7. Fallen human nature is sinful, i.e. self-centred, and this self-centredness extends to all human activities in every age.*

*8. Because all human decisions are made in a sin-impregnated human environment, all decisions must be evaluated historically in terms of the lesser of two or more evils.*

(d) Redemptive principles:

*9. To God, history is "totum simul" - an eternal present - and in the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross, His love goes out to men of all ages.*

*10. Redemption from self-centredness takes place in the presence of Christ, and is available to anyone who puts his trust in Him.*

136. Harvey, *op.cit.*, p 60-61.

137. Montgomery, *Principalities and Powers, The World of the Occult*, p 25-46.

138. John Warwick Montgomery, *Demon Possession*.

139. Morton Kelsey, *Encounter with God, A Theology of Christian Experience; Christianity and Healing, in Ancient Thoughts and Modern Times; The Christian and the Supernatural; Speaking in Tongues, An Experiment in Spiritual Experience.*



1. e.g.. R.H. Fuller, *The Foundations of N.T. Christology*, op.cit., p 18.
2. G.E. Ladd, *The N.T. and Criticism*, p 163-169; C. F.H. Henry. Ed., *Jesus of Nazareth Saviour and Lord*, the following articles: - Everett F. Harrison, *Gemeinde-theologie: The Bane of Gospel Criticism*, p 159-173, F.F. Bruce, *History and the Gospel*, p 89-107, Ralph P. Martin, *The New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p25-45, especially p 42-43, Bastiaan Van Elderen, *The Teaching of Jesus and the Gospel events*, p 111-119; Morna D. Hooker, *Christology & Methodology* p 480-487; R.T. France, *Jesus and The Old Testament*, p 13-24; I.H. Marshall, *The Origins of New Testament Christology*, especially p 57-58; I Believe in the Historical Jesus, p 117-139, 170-177, especially 199-211; David R. Catchpole, *Tradition History* p 165-178.
3. We therefore follow the approach of I.H. Marshall, *Commentary*, op.cit., in the case of the Lucan narrative and Albright & Mann, *Matthew*, op.cit., in the Matthean narrative rather than the approach of Raymond Brown, *Birth*, op.cit.
4. R. McL. Wilson, op.cit.
5. Paul Winter, *'On Luke and Lucan Sources'*, op.cit., p 24.
6. E.L. Abel, *The Genealogies of Jesus O XPICTOC*.  
J. Edgar Bruns, *'Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus'*, p 981.  
Frank Stagg, *The Broadman Bible Commentary; Matthew* p 81.  
Floyd V. Filson, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, p 53.  
Herman C. Waetjen, *The Genealogy as the key to the Gospel according to Matthew* p 207 note 10.
7. We refer to A.H. McNeil and Albright and Mann who both follow Allen.  
A.H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* p 2-3; Allen, op.cit., p4. Also H.C. Waetjen, op.cit., p 207, note 10.
8. Albright & Mann, op.cit., p4.  
Allen, op.cit., p4.  
Brown notes this as one of the most probable explanations *Birth*, op.cit., p82.  
Recently D.E. Nineham has rejected this view, though he gives no critical reasons.  
D.E. Nineham: *The Genealogy in St. Matthew's Gospel and its significance for study of the Gospels*, p 431-433.
9. Allen states *'there are only thirteen names in the third division...and this is impossible, in view of verse 17...the text must be corrupt'*. Allen, op.cit., p 4. The clue lies in the fact that in verse 11 the text refers to Jechoniah's brothers. He had no brothers. However Jehoiakim did have brothers ( 1 Chron.3.15). This suggests that Ιεχονιαν in verse 11 is a corruption of Ιωακειμ. Albright and Mann (op.cit. p 4) follow Allen in this view as well.
10. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Matthew*, p 125.
11. Thus Goulder comments, *'It is unfortunate that Matthew has miscounted and given us only thirteen new names, but he tells us his intention in verse 17.'* Goulder, op.cit., p229.

12. K. Stendahl is one who cannot believe that Matthew could simply not count properly, Peake's commentary on the Bible, p 770-771.
13. This possibility becomes more persuasive when one examines the history of Jechoniah in the O.T. As Jeremiah describes Jechoniah at the time of the exile he truly stands as a 'dead man'. *'As I live, says the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off and give you into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon... Thus for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling in Judah'* (Jer 2:24,30). As the cursed king he represents the demise of the monarchy. However in the end Jeremiah describes how he is freed from prison and is allowed to sit at table with Evil-merodach, and how *'he gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon'* (Jer 52:31-34). This is the beginning of the new Jechoniah who evidently has the curse lifted from him because he begets an heir, namely Shealtiel (1 Chron 3:17). C.T. Davis in an original article on the genealogy states that in Rabbinic interpretation the birth of Shealtiel is regarded as a result of a miraculous 'planting' of the royal seed. *'Through a miracle conception occurs and the root of Jesse is planted. As an exile Jeconiah leads Israel out of rebellion into Obedience'*. Charles Thomas Davis, *'The Fulfilment of Creation, A study of Matthew's Genealogy'*, p530.

Waetjen, *op.cit.*, p208-209, notices the double use of Jechoniah in connection with the exile and return, but does not use this as an explanation of the numerical problem. His explanation, based on the Apocalypse of 2 Baruch 55-74, must surely remain very much in the area of conjecture, although admittedly it does lead him to a fruitful understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

This view is also adopted by R.T. Hood *'The Genealogies of Jesus'*, 1967, quoted in Waetjen, *op.cit.*, p 209, note 21 and 24, as well as Barnes Tatum *'The origin of Jesus Messiah'* (Matt. 1:1,18a): *Matthew's use of the infancy traditions*, p 529 note 20. If an alternative view is to be preferred the next best seems to be that David, rather than Jechoniah had been counted twice. A plausible case for this has been made by Barclay M. Newman, *'Matthew 1:18. Some comments and a Suggested Reconstruction.'* p 209-212. In support of David's name in particular being counted twice would be the numerical acrostic of David (3x14) and the centrality of the title 'Son of David' in the genealogy and the infancy narrative.

14. The Greek New Testament.  
S.E. Johnson, *The Interpreter's Bible: Matthew*, p253.  
Filson, *op.cit.*, p 53.  
Stagg, *op.cit.*, p 82.  
Brown, *Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 62-64 and Waetjen *op.cit.*, p 216 and note 57.
15. Waetjen, *op.cit.*, we feel correctly argues forcibly for the fact that the change from the repetition *εγεννησεν* (39 times) to *εγγεννηθη* is deliberate and reveals the real intention of the evangelist, that in Jesus we have the *'most extraordinary discontinuity of all'*. *'The greatest anomaly of the entire genealogy occurs here'* (p216). His point is that in the course of the genealogy the history of Israel is shown to have a *'uniform progression and irregularity: in the generation of Jesus it reaches the very climax of continuity and discontinuity'* (p217).
16. McNeile, *op.cit.*, p 4.
17. Allen, *op.cit.*, p 6. For a similar statement see Grundmann, *Das Evangelium Nach Matthäus*, p 60.
18. See Brown, *Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 15.
19. Albright and Mann *op.cit.*, p 4.
20. Abel, *op.cit.*

21. Norman Walker, *'The Alleged Matthean Errata.'* p 391-394.
22. Albright and Mann, *op.cit.*, p 5 - 6. This is more acceptable than the views of the author set forth by Nineham, *op.cit.*, p 421 - 444. Nineham argues that Matthew must have started with the presupposition that Jesus was the Messiah then thought out how his genealogy *'may have been'*, and then have written what he felt it *'must have been'* as though it really was so (p436-437). He defines this as *'historification of non-historical materials'*. Such a method can only be accepted for Matthew if it can be shown that Matthew did not receive a ready-made genealogy from somewhere. But this has not so far been shown to be the case. Waetjen, *op.cit.*, points out that Paul knew his own ancestry and accepts that such genealogical records must have been kept by the Jews (p207, note 15). Nineham is also aware that Jeremias (usually regarded as an authority) accepts that Matthew received his basic material from somewhere (p431). It is therefore much better to assume for the present that Matthew received a certain tradition and handled it in good faith. By this we do not deny that Matthew edited the material he received for his own theological purpose. It must be accepted that according to Rabbinical method the use of a genealogy was a kind of homiletical exercise. Nevertheless if Nineham's basic understanding of the *'evangelists's mind'* is not necessary, then neither is the projection of such a *'mind'* into the remainder of the gospel or the remainder of the infancy narrative. Grundmann points out that family genealogical records were common in first century Judaism, and mentions 1 Tim. 1.4 as testimony to this, Matthäus, *op.cit.*, p 60-61.
23. Goulder, *op.cit.*, p 233.
24. Allen, *op.cit.*, p 2. A. Vögtle, *'Die Matthäische kingheids geschichte'*, p 154f.
25. Box, *op.cit.*, p 13.
26. Allen, *op. cit.*, p 6.
27. Davis, *'The Fulfilment...'* *op. cit.*, p 520-535. The following table will indicate, by underlining, the real nature of the added material.
 

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1:2-3   | Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. <u>Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar</u>   |
| 1:5     | Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab<br><u>Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth</u>  |
| 1:6     | Jesse the father of David the King<br><u>David the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah</u>   |
| 1:11-12 | Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon. <u>After the deportation to Babylon, Jechoniah</u> |
| 1:16    | Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.  |

There are in fact seven additions to what would have been a standard genealogy. It becomes evident from examining them that the history of salvation is being relived as a fitting introduction to the coming of the eschatological moment.
28. Davis, *'The Fulfilment ...'* *op. cit.*, p523.
29. See Brown, *Birth*, *op. cit.*, p 69-70. We are not discussing at this point whether Matthew had good critical reasons to believe what he did.

30. Filson, *op. cit.*, p 54; Stagg, *op. cit.*, p 84; Albright and Mann, *op. cit.*, p7; David Hill, *Matthew, The New Century Bible*, p 77-78.
31. McNeile, *op. cit.*, p7.
32. See Brown, *Birth*, *op. cit.*, p 128 on 'quietly', i.e. he was not going to accuse her publicly.
33. See Brown, *Birth*, *op. cit.*, p 126-127 and notes on the question of Joseph's 'suspicion' or 'fear'.
34. J. Massingberde Ford, 'Mary's Virginitas Post-Partum and Jewish Law' p 269-272. Firstly she notes that according to the laws of defilement a man was not permitted to take his wife to himself if she had known contact with another man. Even legitimate second marriage rendered a woman unfit to be taken back by her first husband. In rabbinic interpretation this defilement was extended to all contact with other males, whether potent or impotent. In the case of such defilement the husband was to consider her 'forbidden for all time' and 'to all the world'. Secondly in Matthew 1:20 the use of παραλαμβάνω refers to Joseph leading her to the house but not necessarily cohabiting with her.

Thirdly, 'defile may be used as something intrinsically holy, such as the books which "defile" the hands ...'. 'All the holy Scriptures render the hands unclean'. The action of God could then be taken as a 'holy defilement'.

Fourthly the word 'overshadow' (ἐπισκιάζω) and its Semitic equivalents (Salal - Hebrew) which referred to the divine shekinah could also refer to the cloak of a pious or scholarly man. Thus Boaz was invited to 'spread the tallith' over Ruth. Noticeably Mary's reply is reminiscent, for 'cohabitation' was 'to lay ones power (reshuth) over a woman.' Both terms (overshadow and power) are used in the Lucan account. Joseph may have easily concluded that God had 'laid his power over her', 'spread his wing over her' and thus made her 'forbidden to the whole world' according to Rabbinical teaching.

35. Brown, *Birth*, *op. cit.*, p 132, attempts to side-step the issue by placing it in the area of 'post-biblical theology' because he believes the Greek use of εως ου need not mean that the action did take place thereafter. This may be so. But in the present context the most natural way to take the words is in the sense that the action did take place.
36. Albright and Mann, *op. cit.*, p8.
37. On apocryphal accounts see e.g. Charles Gore, *op. cit.*, p 56-57.
38. Brown, *Birth*, *op. cit.*, p 124-125.
39. Brown, *Birth* *op. cit.*, p 8.
40. McNeile, *op. cit.*, p8. Brown, *Birth*, *op. cit.*, (p131) rejects this on the grounds that the Greek speaking Christians would have understood this play on words. However, this objection loses its force if one accepts Gundry's thesis of a Sitz im Leben for Matthew's Gospel where three languages were in use together. This play on words is in fact a perfect example of the kind of argument which a writer would have employed in a multi-language environment: See Robert Horton Gundry, *The Use of the O.T. in St. Matthews Gospel, with Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, p174-178, especially p 176.

41. See too Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 111-112. Waetjen points out that Matthew's story at many points diverges from the story of Joseph in Genesis op cit., 225-226. He then goes on to explain that there are great similarities between the figure of Joseph in the Testament of the Twelve Patriachs and Joseph in the Matthean infancy narrative (p226-230). The parallels may well be there, but in view of the problems of dating this book, and especially due to the possibility of Christian influence we feel that it cannot be used as a possible source for Matthew. (On the dating, see - ZEB p 679-682 Vol.V)
  
42. Goulder, op.cit., p 234-235.
  
43. McNeile, op.cit., p 11. McNeile comments: *'Some who cannot accept the narrative as historical have thought that Isaiah's words in their Greek form gave rise to the belief in the virgin birth. But it is astonishing that ... the O.T. passage which, according to this theory, is the foundation of the whole, is nowhere even remotely alluded to, apart from Matt. 1:23'*.  
  
Gundry, *The Use of the O.T.* op.cit., p172-174, rejects the view that Matthew's method of using the O.T. can be equated with the actualisation of O.T. scriptures found in the midrash-pesher type of exegesis at Qumran. He believes Matthew must have seen as a targumist in his own right who always moves from the eschatological event to the O.T. passages rather than the other way round. See also W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, p208-209, for a similar estimation of Matthew's exegetical method. Davies' comments here tend to contradict his earlier statements about the midrashic non-historicity of the infancy narrative, p 61-64.
  
44. The O.T. has three terms for young women:  
  
Na'arah, which means 'girl' or 'damsel', occurs 59 times;  
bethulah, which means 'a grown up girl whom no man has known' (i.e. virgin in the strict sense) is used 50 times in the O.T.;  
'almah' (used in Isaiah 7:14) which means 'a marriageable girl, young woman, until the birth of her first child' is used three times of an unmarried girl (Gen 24: 53; Ex 2:8; Ps. 68:25;) and twice of Solomon's harem girls (Song of Sol 1:3;6:8). It need not therefore demand virginity.
  
45. Dale Moody, *'Isaiah 7.14 in the Revised Standard Version'* p 61-68.  
However there are problems which make it difficult to simply accept that the use of almah in the context of Isaiah 7:14 did not connote virginity. See R.H. Gundry, *The Use of the O.T.*, op cit., p226-227. One cannot therefore reject the Septuagint rendering out of hand. It may still be the best, though dogmatism on either side is not warranted. According to D. Moody virginity is more emphasised in Luke than in Matthew. *'In the nativity narrative in Luke 1-2 in which Mary is the central figure, a more complete presentation of the miraculous conception is found'*.
  
46. Walker, op cit., p 392. Matthew obviously took Isaiah 7:14 to refer to strict virginity and connected it with Mary's virginity. But he did this simply because he read παρθενος in Isaiah 7:14, which can easily mean a strict virgin. We can hardly blame him for this. See Delling in TDNT Vol. 8, p6-37 and D. Moody, op.cit. In the Septuagint παρθενος neither affirms nor denies strict virginity. As support for the fact that Matthew's stress was on 'Emmanuel', rather than on virginity, see Michael Krämer, *'Die Menschwerdung Jesu Christi nach Matthäus'*, p 1-50.



47. See G.E. Ladd on the prophetic view of history which held the near and the distant future in tension. *The Presence of the Future*. Also E.E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, p151 for the fact that the N.T. writers usually interpreted whole passages Christologically, rather than isolated texts.
  
48. Brown, *Birth* op cit., p 147-148, gives five points on this issue. The second is unacceptable. It is difficult to understand how he can say that the 'everlasting kingdom' of Isa. 9 is not yet Messianic. As soon as we accept this as Messianic then we can no longer remove all Messianic connotations from the Emmanuel prophecy. Of the three positions taken historically Brown thus altogether fails to mention the double reference theory. (For the three positions see E.J. Young, *Isaiah*, Vol 1, New International Commentary, p266-346.)  
If Brown had seen this it would have saved him the difficulty of having to 'explain' how he could deny the legitimacy of Matthew's use of Isa 7:14 on the 'critical' level only to grant its legitimacy on another level, p 150, note 53.
  
49. Thus Allen affirms that *'The main outline of the story of the Magi is in many ways noteworthy for its historical probability'*. The story *'violates no canon of historical probability'*. The only element which we cannot accept is the moving of the star, but here he believes *'it is extremely unlikely that he (i.e. Matthew) intended it to be taken as a bald statement of fact.'* Allen, op.cit., p 14. He is followed by Albright who considers the story *'broadly historical'*. Similarly Frank Stagg believes that *'Matthew intended to relate history not legend'* and adds that while the *'form'* of the story was influenced by O.T. texts the story must have come first and the support of O.T. incidents must have been discovered second. Albright and Mann, op.cit., p 16; Stagg, op.cit. p85. Both Johnson and Hill sidestep the historiographical issue because they feel it is unimportant. According to the former *'The value and importance of the narratives do not depend on its accuracy; the story is rather to be thought of as a work of art...'* Johnson, op.cit., p256. According to the latter *'despite their sobriety of tone, primarily (they are) instruments of theological statement rather than examples of historical description.'* Hill, op.cit., p 80.
  
50. Brown, op.cit., p 188. Grundmann finds the source material of Matthew's text in the story of the visit of Parthian magicians to Nero in A.D. 60, the birth legend of the Arabian cult of Dusares, based at Petra, the widespread knowledge of Jewish Messianism in the East, the common myth about the birth of great heroes, and Jewish midrashic legends about the birth of Abraham, the birth of Moses and the story of Balaam, Matthäus, op.cit., p 74-76.
  
51. Brown .. dismisses this kind of evidence as *'verisimilitude'* rather than historical evidence. A dictionary definition of verisimilitude includes the idea of preprobability. But as we have explained (chapter 3) historical arguments always deal with probabilities. Of course we cannot claim that the possibilities listed here below are certain historical evidences. But if there is a good correspondence between the Matthean narrative and contemporary circumstances then one cannot dismiss this as *'verisimilitude'*. Is this not a way of evading evidence by playing with words?
  
52. It is often presumed that they cannot have been Jews due to the fact that they inquired about *'the king of the Jews'*. However Albright and Mann point out that the phrase was used by the orthodox King Aristotlus I (104-103BC). Albright and Mann op.cit., p 12. Further it is becoming more evident that Jewish tradition was often deeply astrological. Fragments of an astrological treatise have been found in Cave 4 of Qumran. The Essenes were evidently known for their ability to predict. This has led M. McNamara to postulate what may be a possible reconstruction of the situation. M. McNamara, *'Were the Magi Essenes?'*, p 305-328. He deduces most of his information from Josephus. Josephus gives various cases where the Essenes were reputedly able to predict events, and then gives the account of Herod's friendship with Menahan the Essene. Menahan is supposed to have predicted that Herod would become King while he was still a child and while no such possibility existed. Once Herod had become King he met Menahan again, who predicted that Herod would reign for twenty or thirty years or more. The expiry date of

this prediction was B.C. 7 McNamara then shows how the Essenes placed great emphasis on the star in Balaam's oracle as a prophecy of the Davidic Messiah. The star of Jacob was prominent in Messianic expectation at the time of Christ's birth. During the same period troubles in Herod's life were mounting. Here we shall merely quote McNamara's outline of events.

- I. Execution of Aristotlus and Alexander - B.C. 7.
- II. Three hundred put to death in Ceasarea - B.C. 7.
- III. Herod makes his first will. Antipater plots his fathers death - B.C. 7.
- IV. Messianic predictions in Herod's court B.C. 7-6 (Apparently the six thousand Pharisees who refused to give their oath were influenced by a prediction of Herod's death and his kingdom being given to another.)

Against this background, and bearing in mind Herod's relationship with Menahan, the appearance of a robed Essene at this juncture asking for the newly born 'King of the Jews' would have been enough to unsettle Herod altogether. But is it possible to equate the Essenes with the Magi? McNamara notes that the terms 'Magi' and 'Chaldeans' were synonymous by the first century, and that Josephus could speak of some Essenes as 'Chaldeans'. Would the Essenes have been ignorant of Micah's prophecy about the birth place of the Messiah? He replies that in the appendix to the Rule of the Qumran communities (IQSb) the Messiah is portrayed as a warring person, and that while Micah's statement concerning the daughter of Zion is quoted, no mention is made of Bethlehem Ephrathah as his birth place. Evidently they were not concerned about his humble origins and did not take note of this prophecy. The absence of any comment about the slaughter of the children in Josephus creates no difficulties because Josephus was dependent upon Nicholas of Damascus for this portion of Herod's reputation. McNamara also draws attention to the fact that the Essenes lived in expectation of the 'Messiah of Righteousness' (meshiah has-sedeg) a term which has similarities with the Hebrew name for Saturn (Sedeg). At this point he mentions the 'preponderance of astrological' beliefs amongst the Essenes.

McNamara's somewhat provincial hypothesis has weaknesses. De Witt Jayne sets the story in its international context. He points out that the Magi, as the recognised priesthood of Media, Medo-Persia, and later the Parthian empire, wielded considerable political power. When the Parthians revolted against the Seleucids in the third century BC the Magi were absorbed into the governing body of the Empire. 'A constitutional council known as the Megistanes was instituted whose duty was to assist in the election of the monarch, and to serve as advisors in governing the nation.' The Magi still held this position in Parthia during the reign of Herod, who was not in the best position geographically, placed as he was between two powerful Empires. In B.C.55 the Romans were decisively defeated by the Parthians at Carrhae. Mark-Antony re-established Roman rule over Palestine in B.C.37. However when he retreated the Parthians regained the whole of Palestine. Herod had to flee to Rome, where he received the title of King. It was only three years later that the Roman troops were able to drive the Parthians out and give Herod his capital city. During the last years of Herod's life pro-Parthian Armenia was fermenting a revolt. This revolt came in B.C.2 and was successful. A fresh invasion of Parthians into the buffer states became a real possibility.

*In Jerusalem the sudden appearance of the Magi, probably travelling in force with all imaginable pomp, and accompanied by adequate cavalry escort, to ensure their safe penetration of Roman territory, certainly alarmed Herod and the populace of Jerusalem, as is reported by Matthew. It would*

*seem as if these Magi were attempting to perpetrate a border incident which could bring swift reprisals from Parthian armies. Their request of Herod regarding him who "has been born King of the Jews", was a calculated insult to him who had contrived and bribed his way into that office. De Witt Jayne, 'Magi' in ZEB Vol 1V, p 31-34.*

Brown notes that the visit of foreign envoys with gifts to the Jewish capital was not an unusual occurrence for those times, Birth, op cit., (p174).

53. This aspect has been described in more detail by Roy A. Rosenberg, who bases his theory on the writing of Don Isaac Abrabamel, a Portuguese Rabbi (1437-1508). It is possible that Abrabamel reflects earlier Jewish traditions. According to him Jewish astrology was based on various types of stellar conjunction. A 'great conjunction' occurred every 239 years, the 'large conjunctions' every 953 years, and the 'Mighty conjunctions' (mahberet asumah) every 2860 years. Abrabamel believed such a mighty conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Pisces took place just prior to the birth of Moses, and would occur again just prior to the birth of the Messiah. According to him the Jewish name for Jupiter was Sedeg (righteousness) and the planet Saturn was identified with El, the Canaanite God whom the Jews identified with Yahweh. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn would then carry the following meaning:

*'Yahweh was giving to his Messiah a portion of his power and authority, so that he, the Messiah, might shatter the wicked principalities that hold sway over the earth, condemn them to punishment and exalt the righteous in their stead.'* The name Sedeg is also connected with the apocalyptic term for the Messiah, the Branch (smh sdg). Enoch 46:3 speaks of the 'Son of Man who has righteousness' (sedeg), and in Acts 3:14; 7:52 and 22:14, Jesus is called the 'righteous one' (saddig). Roy A. Rosenberg, 'The Star of the Messiah' Reconsidered', p 105-109.

54. The conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Pisces in B.C.6 was first demonstrated by Johannes Kepler. A recent article published by the Adler Planetarium and Astronomical Museum of Chicago gives further details. According to ancient astrologers Pisces was called 'the house of the Hebrews' and Saturn was believed to rule over the destiny of the Jews. The following conjunction took place in B.C. 7-6.

*Jupiter and Saturn do not move steadily eastward among the stars but sometimes appear to reverse their motions and go westward for a few months. If this happens at just the right time after Jupiter has passed Saturn, Jupiter will pass Saturn a second time as it reverses its motion, and a third time when it starts forward again, giving three conjunctions in a few months instead of the usual one each twenty years. This happened in Pisces on May 29, September 29 and December 4 of 7 BC. Also in Spring of 8 BC, after Mars had moved away from Jupiter and Saturn but while they were still fairly close together, Venus passed the two planets, forming another close and unusual grouping visible in the morning sky. Thus the Wise Men saw several rare and, to them, very significant events...First, during 7 BC*

*the triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn that occurs only once each 125 years. Next the close grouping of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn early in 6 BC, which occurs only once in 805 years.*

Following this

*the third close grouping of Venus, Jupiter and Saturn took place. What was the Star of Bethlehem?* The Adler Planetarium and Astronomical Museum of Chicago, p 280.

Tied to this evidence is the evidence from cuneiform texts during the period B.C. 17 to A.D. 10 which indicate a special interest in planetary phenomena. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 172.

55. It is not good enough to evade such evidence by the use of a concept such as 'verisimilitude'. Historical evidence must be taken into account. Such an explanation may just be possible if one relies upon the later dating of Matthew. However as soon as the earlier dating becomes at least a good possibility such historical evidence has to be taken seriously. The dating of Matthew will be discussed at the end of this section.
56. According to Cave, p 385-389, the narrative arose out of the annual reading in the early Synagogues in the second and last years of the cycle, in the month of Sivan. In the last year of the cycle, at the eleventh and twelfth Sabbaths, (i.e. Sivan), the readings were Num.22.2;23-9 with Mic.5.6f as prophetic lesson and Gen. 14.1 with Mic.4.1-5 as accompanying reading. These readings include a number of parallels with Matthew's story. In Num.22.2f a Moabite King summons a 'magician from the East' (23.7), who instead of cursing Israel, blesses her. Thus Moab is subjugated. The particular 'magician' or 'magnus' concerned tells of his vision of the star out of Jacob (Num.24.17) who will rule Israel. The Messianic interpretation of this prophecy had become established by the first century. The Targum Onkelos reads 'A King shall rise from Jacob and a Messiah shall be exalted in Israel'. The Septuagint has *ανατελλειν* for the Eastern mountains (23.7) and Matthew has the magi coming from the *ανατολη*. Thus Herod the Edomite parallels Balaam the Moabite, the magi correspond to Balaam the seer, and in both cases the Messianic star appears. In Gen. 14.1f we have the account of the Eastern Kings and the prophetic lesson ends with Mic.5.2, the prophecy of Bethlehem Ephrathah. This becomes Matthew's testimonia. In the second year the cycle and the ninth and tenth Sabbaths (i.e. Sivan) the readings were Ex. 23.20f with Mal.3.1f and Ex.25.1f with Haggai 2.8f as prophetic lesson. Again there are parallels. Mal.3.3 speaks of the purifying of the sons of Levi as a purifier of silver, and the judgement which will descend upon the sorcerers as described in Mal.3.5. In Ex.25.1-7 mention is made of the offering to the Lord, including such items as gold, silver, oil and spices and the anointing oil for fragrant incense. Haggai 2.8 declares 'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord.' Much mention was thus made at this time of offerings to the Lord. Sorcerers come into the picture as well. Cave concludes, 'It would seem then that the scriptural setting of the story of the Magi is to be found in the lections of the end of Sivan.' Cave, op.cit., p 385-389.

Goulder, op.cit., proposes a different setting for this story, namely 'the Sidrah of the sixth sabbath of the annual cycle', which dealt with Gen.25.19;28.8. This is the account of Jacob's struggles with Esau or Edom. When Isaac blessed Jacob he declared 'Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you' (Gen.27.29). In return for losing his birthright Edom swore to kill Jacob. In Matthew's story Kings come to bow at the son of Jacob's feet (Jacob - Israel = Jesus the new Israel), and

Herod the Edomite determines to kill him. The gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh are taken from Isa.60.3-6 and Ps.72.10-15. In the former scripture kings come to the '*brightness of your rising*' with gold and frankincense. In Song of Solomon those who come from the wilderness bring myrrh and frankincense. For Matthew not only was Jesus a second Jacob/Israel but his father was a second Joseph. He, like Joseph, dreamed dreams. In Joseph's dream the stars bowed to him (Gen.37.8-9). Wise men figured in his life (Gen.41.8) and his brothers bowed to him (Gen.42.6) bringing gifts of gum, myrrh, nuts and almonds (Gen.43.11). Jesus is more than a second Jacob. He is also the Son of David who must be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah (Mic.5.2) and become a shepherd in Israel (2 Sam.5.2).

Brown, Birth,op.cit., sees the entire story of the magi arising from the story of Balaam and later midrashic developments of the story of Philo. He differs from the previous two scholars in the sense that he sees the rise of the Balaam story as taking place in the pre-Matthean development of the story in Philo.

Paul Winter similarly believes the '*Slaughter of the Innocents*', the warning by the Magi, and the dreams of Jacob are modelled on Jewish midrashic folklore, which was used to maintain the faith of the early church due to the delay of the parousia. With Johnson he believes that the historicity of those events is unimportant. '*Reality is in believing - not in facts, Faith is never based on facts: it is facts that are based on faith.*' *Jewish Folklore in the Matthean Birth Story*, p 34-42, quote page 42.

57. Ralph P.Martin, '*St. Matthew's Gospel in Recent Study*', p 132.
58. One needs only to combine together the theories of Cave, Goulder and Brown and one is faced with an editorial ability on the part of Matthew (or those involved in the pre-Matthean development of the tradition) which is nothing short of miraculous. Thus Brown is found to remark '*As we look back briefly on the Matthean infancy narrative, the skill of the evangelist is admirable. He has woven disparate pre-Matthean material into a remarkable preface to his gospel*'. Birth,op.cit., p 231. His skill, if those scholars are correct, is indeed 'remarkable, in fact a little too remarkable.
59. This criticism would not apply to the work of Brown.
60. Curiously, Albright and Mann regard this as a factor against the historicity of the narrative and seek to explain the absence of this text by the fact that the gnostics might have misused it. But surely the absence of this text should be used to demonstrate exactly the opposite. Why must Matthew use any particular testimonia?  
  
Thus for instance, Gundry in The use of the O.T.,op.cit., p 195, '*The most obvious testimonies, Num.24.17 and Isa.60.6; Ps.72.10, are not formally cited, as they surely would have been had they been the source of the magi-story.*' Gundry says this while fully recognising that Num.24.17 may very possibly have been alluded to, p 128.  
  
Brown also mentions the Balaam prophecy and its use in the midrashic tradition, but does not make much comment on the absence of Num.22-24 as a formula quotation. This seems strange, Birth.op.cit., p 117 and note 46 and p 190-196.
61. Albright and Mann comment as follows '*What seems to us to be wholly inadmissible is the suggestion that Matthew was so anxious to represent Jesus as a new Moses, leading a new Exodus from Egypt into the promised land, that the evangelist has constructed an allegory which includes Gentiles (the Magi)*'. Albright and Mann, op.cit., p 16.

Similarly Stagg comments '*Matthew intended to relate history, not legend. This is not to overlook the part played by the O.T. in shaping the story, but it is arbitrary to say that the story was invented to supply a fulfilment to Old Testament texts.*' Stagg, *op.cit.*, p 85.

62. McNamara, *op.cit.*, p 305.

Gundry supports the distinction we are making between two kinds of midrashic method though he uses different terminology. He refers to the Jewish form of midrash, where the starting point is the O.T. text as '*midrash-pesher*', and to the Christian midrashic method, where the historical Jesus is the starting point from which the O.T. is interpreted, as '*targum*'. The Use of the O.T., *op.cit.*, p 172-174.

63. See Brown, *Birth, op.cit.*, p 116-117 for a good survey of these legends.

64. Also to be rejected is the theory of an apologetic astrology. '*There is not the slightest hint on conversion or of false practice in Matthew's description of the magi; they are wholly admirable.*' Brown *Birth, op.cit.*, p 168.

65. Brown attempts to evade the secondary nature of Josephus' information as follows: '*if it (i.e. the massacre) acquired any widespread notoriety, Josephus should have heard it, and, if he knew it, he would have mentioned it, as suiting his purpose*' *Birth, op.cit.*, p 226 note 34. But would the death of twenty children in a small town have received '*widespread notoriety*'? This is an '*if*' which remains very much in doubt.

66. He murdered his own two sons by his wife Maria and then had his son Antipater executed five days before his own death. In order to make the people mourn at his death (for they would never mourn for his death) he ordered that all the leading men of Jerusalem should be put to death immediately after his own. Fortunately this command was never obeyed. The murder of the children in Nazareth is particularly true to life because Herod's strongest neurosis was his great suspicion, which obviously disposed him to insane actions on numerous occasions.

67. Soon after he came to power he had three thousand executed in Jerusalem because of the incident in connection with the Roman eagle which had been erected at the temple gate. His actions eventually became unpalatable even to the Roman authorities, and he was removed from office.

68. McNeile, *op.cit.*, p 19.

69. Albright and Mann, *op.cit.*, p 17.

70. Henry Wansbrough, '*Event & Interpretation VI. The Childhood of Jesus*', p 112-119) '*VIII. The Adoption of Jesus*', p 921-928.

71. Johnson, *op.cit.*, p 261.

72. Wansbrough, *op.cit.*, p 117-118. Support for the Moses-Jesus typology in the pre-Matthean tradition behind Matt. 2.13-15 will be found in A. Vöglte, '*Kindheitsgeschichte*', *op.cit.*, p 165-181, and Grundmann, *Matthäus, op.cit.*, p 66, '*dem rabbinischen Theologumenon*'.

73. Goulder, *op.cit.*, p 239-241; G.D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, p 53.

74. Cave, *op.cit.*, p 387-390. Following David Daube: *The N.T. and Rabbinic Judaism* p 186-195, especially p 190-191.

Here Brown combines elements of the above two scholarly theories, but again differs in that he does not appeal to the Matthean use of the Jewish lection-

ary. Otherwise his basic thesis as to the origins of Matthew's composition is much the same. *Birth, op.cit.*, p 213-219.

75. M.D.Goulder points to the seventh Sabbath of the cycle and C.H. Cave points to the Passover Sabbath. Goulder believes that Moses' departure from and return to Egypt is the basis of Christ's journey to Egypt and back to Israel. Cave denies that this can be used because the O.T. story is in reverse order.

76. Stagg has pungently remarked;

*A parallel illustrating the working principle may be found in the later rabbinical application of Numbers 24.17 to Bar Cocheba, "Son of the star". No scholar suggests that the story of Bar Cocheba and the second Jewish-Roman war were invented in order to supply a fulfilment to this obscure text. Stagg, op.cit., p 88.*

See also R.H.Gundry, *The Use of the O.T., op.cit.*, p 194-197 on the fact that 'The looseness with which many Matthean citations from the O.T. are appended shows that the direction is from tradition to prophecy, not vice versa'.

77. McNeile, *op.cit.*, p 23.

78. Stagg can say in his commentary, *Matthew puts Jesus above Moses, not in a sequence with him. Jesus came not as a new Moses but as the "son of Abraham, the son of David", and also the Son of God, whose role it was to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, not to give a new Law.'*

Stagg, *op.cit.*, p 88. This statement might be a little too strong. There does seem to be some parallel in the terminology Matthew uses. However a use of the O.T. terminology - hardly unexpected in a Palestinian Jew steeped in the O.T. scriptures - and even a conscious comparison between O.T. and N.T. events is not the same as a creation of stories based upon O.T. incidents, especially when those incidents are drawn from such a wide field.

79. Here again we reject Raymond Brown's evaluation of the historical evidence by his terminological distinction between history and versimilitude. It does not seem to make sense to admit some elements of the tradition as having a plausible historical setting only to say in the next breath that such a plausible historical setting is due to 'versimilitude'. Either the Matthean account does fit well into the historical context or it does not. If it does, then some weight must be given to this fact in a discussion of the historicity of the Matthean tradition. Brown, *Birth, op.cit.*, p 225-228.

80. Johnson, *op.cit.*, p 262.

81. There are two related problems. Firstly, it has been doubted that Ναζωραῖος means 'inhabitant of Nazareth'. This problem has been answered principally by the work of Albright. J.A. Sanders states;

*There surely can be no doubt remaining about the geographical validity of Matthew's reference since the massive statement on the subject by William F. Albright, who following George Foot Moore, showed clearly that the vulgar Aramic form would have become*

*Nazoraya* - Ναζωραιος. *That* Ναζωραιος *as well as* Ναζωρηνος *says and means Nazarene in the sense of "inhabitant of Nazareth" can no longer be seriously questioned.*

J.A. Sanders, 'NAZORAIOS in Matt 2.23', p 169.

Secondly the identification of any O.T. text which speaks of Nazareth remains a problem. The older suggestion was that Matthew was referring to the Hebrew terms for Nazarite (Num.6). But attempts to link the two terms have been unsuccessful. More recently the theory has been restated in a slightly different sense which removes the linguistic difficulty. Matthew Black has suggested that the term *Ναζωραιοι* referred initially to a sect of John the Baptist which was widespread in Palestine prior to the Christian community. Cave, *op.cit.*, p 390. Epiphanius mentions such a pre-Christian sect, and the Mandaeans called themselves *nasorayya*, i.e. 'guardians' or 'keepers' of traditions. They probably derived this word from the Syrian term for 'Christian' which may in turn go back to the same baptist sect. It seems possible that the *Ναζωραιοι* of Epiphanius saw themselves as a revival of the ancient Nazarite tradition. The term would then be linked with the Nazarite vow without having to make a direct linguistic link between *Ναζωραιος* and the Hebrew for Nazarite. Hill, *op.cit.*, p 87-88.

J.A. Sanders supports this view on other grounds. Both Nazarites in the Bible, Samson and Samuel, were conceived by divine intervention, as was Jesus. Matthew, who has already quoted Isa 7:14 cannot have overlooked the story of Samson's birth, especially the fact that this mother was visited by an angel. Manoa, like Joseph, had doubts about his wife's conception (Jud.13,11-13.21). Both of Matthew's first two chapters end in similar terminology: *και καλεσεις το ονομα Ιησου* (Matt. 1.25) *οτι Ναδωραιος κληθησεται* (Matt. 2.23). Matt. 1.21 in turn can be compared with Judges 13.5 in the Septuagint: *και αυτος αρζεται οωδευ τον Ισραηλ...* (Jud. 13.5) - *αυτος γαρ σωσει τον λαον αυτον απο των αναρτιων* (Matt. 1.21). This would tend to connect Matt. 2.23 with Judges 13.5. Matthew's indeterminate reference to 'the prophets' (*του προφητου*) might refer to the fact that Judges came at the beginning of the prophetic writings. Sanders, *op.cit.*, p 169-172.

Alternatively William F. Albright has drawn attention to Jer. 31.6 as a possible reference. Matthew has just quoted Jer. 31:15. The Pershitta text of Matt. 2:23 reads *Nasath* and *Nasraya*, and according to Albright reflects an older tradition. Following this lead, he looked for a form of the Hebrew consonants *nsr* where the meaning had been lost in the Masoretic and Septuagintal texts. Jer. 31:6 is such a case. The sense has been lost, but with a little modification can mean 'For there is a day in which guards (*nosrim*) on Mount Ephraim will call.' The name Nazareth meaning 'guarder' or 'preserver' would then have a connection with the 'guards' in Jer. 31:6. Albright, *op.cit.*, p 21-22.

Yet another suggestion is that the indeterminate reference to the prophets in general may mean that *οτι Ναζωραιος κληθησεται* should not be construed as an actual quotation but should continue the sense of the sentence 'that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he shall be called a Nazarene'. The 'indirect quotation' view is supported by W. Barnes Tatum: 'Matt. 2:23 - Word-play and Misleading Translations'. p 135-138. The disdain which the Jews in general held for the inhabitants of Nazareth would then be referred to and the prophetic passages about the humiliation of the Messiah would be applicable (e.g. Isa. 53:3). This view is favoured by Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament*, *op.cit.* also quoted in Albright, *op.cit.*, p 22 and Hendriksen, *op.cit.*, p 188-190, amongst modern commentators.



The most popular view is the one which finds an allusion to the Hebrew *naser* (branch). This was a common term for the Messiah in first century Judaism, and appears in Isa 11:1. The same thought occurs in Zech.3:8. A similar viewpoint to Isa. 49:6 where 'preserved' comes from the Hebrew root *nsr* to 'guard'. It occurs again in Isa. 42:6. Both passages refer to the 'Servant'. This form could be taken as an adjective of *naser* (branch) in Isa.11:1. Norman Walker gives a succinct statement:

*The ordinary root n-sr means "watch", "guard preserve", "protect" ... The "shoot" is the Preserved One who is to arise out of the seemingly dead stump of Israel. Apparently "Nazareth" is from the same root, and can mean "Protectress", "Preserver", so that a word-play is implied. Joseph went and dwelt in a city called "Protectress", "Preserver" so that Jesus might be called "Protected", "Preserved", "Nasur", "Nazoraïos", "Nazarene". Walker, op.cit., p 392-393.*

This view is possibly the best. See K. Stendahl, *The School of Saint Matthew and its use of the Old Testament* p 103-104.

82. Raymond Brown gives a good summary of the various views and points out that we need not necessarily choose only one interpretation. We should not therefore defend any particular theory with 'exclusivity'. Matthew may have had more than one allusion in mind. *Birth*, op.cit., p209-213.
83. It is also worth pointing out that Matthew's text is closer to the MT than the Septuagint. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 221-223. This shows that along with the gospel itself the Matthean infancy narrative probably arose in a Hebrew-Palestinian environment. This point will be made again in the discussion of the date and origin of the Matthean infancy tradition.
84. Raymond Brown sees a parallel between 'the burial in the tomb and the reappearance of the risen Jesus after three days in the one instance, and the flight to Egypt and return to the land of Israel in the other'. *Birth*, op.cit., p214 note 2. C.F.D. Moule defines this testimonia as a 'vehicular' rather than a 'relational' use of the O.T. By this he means that there is no logical relationship between Hosea and what Matthew takes as a fulfilment event. Matthew has simply used the testimonia of Hosea 11:1 because it suits him. This seems to be going too far. This testimonia could actually be placed in Moule's category of 'relational' fulfilment. True Hosea 11:1 is not literally fulfilled in the return from Egypt. Hosea 11:1 indicates an 'actual structure of relationship' between the Exodus event and the redemption which Christ wrought for the new Israel. This is Matthew's fundamental assertion, despite the facts that he uses the methods of exegesis common to the Qumran covenanters in making his point. C.F.D. Moule - *The Origin of Christology*; p127-134, especially p 127-129 and 132.
85. Goulder has helpfully given us a summary of his research in each pericope. See op.cit., p 235,238,239,241.
86. As striking as the ending formulas are, the two structurally identical remarks at 4.17 and 16.21 *απο τότε ηρξατο ο Ιησους* followed by *κηρυσσειν και λεγειν* in

the first case and *δεικνυει* in the second case) are as remarkable. It is noticeable that the content of Matthew's Gospel falls under these two headings. The first half (4:17-6:20) is occupied with the preaching of the kingdom and the second half (16:21f) is occupied with Christ's journey to Jerusalem and his death, burial and resurrection. This suggests that the first section of Matthew's structure should be regarded as 1:1-4:16 rather than 1:1-2:23. Possibly the heading *βιβλος γενεσεως* *Ιησου χριστου υιου Δαυιδ υιου Αβρααμ* at 1:1 may refer to 1:1-4:16 rather than the genealogy, the infancy narrative or the whole Gospel. In this case each part of Matthew could begin with a type of heading (i.e. 1:1; 4:17; 16:21). We need not doubt that 3:1-4:16 is a unity. This is evident from the *τοτε* in 3:13 and 4:1, the *δε* in 4:12 and the omission of Jesus' name at 4:12. What then of the rather indeterminate *In those days* at 3:1?

- Here Edgar Krentz compares this phrase with similar cases in the O.T. (i.e. Exodus 2:11). It is not used as a chronological link, but it does imply a continuity of narrative. The strongest argument for the unity of 1:1-4:16 is however the use of the formula quotations. The five that occur in 1:1-2:23 are usually regarded as the unifying factor in that section. Two more occur in 3:1-4:16. This makes seven, a number which Matthew was clearly fond of and which usually stands for completeness. Further, the particularly geographical interest of the first five have been noted. The coming of Emmanuel takes place 'in Bethlehem of Judea' (1:23 and 1). The prophet Micah locates Bethlehem as the birth place of the Messiah (2:5-6). The next quotation refers to Egypt (2:15), the following one to Ramah (2:17), and the last one to Nazareth (2:23). This geographical interest is similarly evident in the next two. The quotation at 3:3 is taken over from Mark, but in such a way that the geographical factor (in the wilderness) is emphasised. This is done by omitting Mark 1:2b (*'behold, I send my messenger before thy face who shall prepare thy way'*). In this manner, the mention of the 'voice in the wilderness' comes to the fore. Further, where Mark gives his geographical note after the quotation (Matt 3:1), the emphasis on Galilee in 4:12-16 and the wilderness in 3:1-3 links up with the emphasis on Judea in 2:1-5. The story moves from Judea, to the wilderness, and then to Galilee. It is often wondered why Matthew omits to mention Isa. 9:6 in his first chapter. This question is explained when we notice that the first part of Isa 9:6f is mentioned in Matt. 4:15f.

All this leads to the conclusion that 1:1-4:16 has a unity of its own. Finally, we may note that the *βιβλος γενεσεως* at 1:1 is usually compared with the similar phrase in Gen. 5:1. In that instance the heading refers to the story of man from Adam to Noah until Noah began his ministry (Gen 6:9 gives the next colophon and begins to narrate Noah's ministry). It concludes his genealogy and an introduction to his life's story. In Matthew we find the same characteristics. Matt. 4:17 begins the story of Christ's ministry. 1:1-4:16 includes his genealogy and an introduction to his life's work. Edgar Krentz, *The Extent of Matthew's Prologue. Toward the Structure of the First Gospel* p409-414. Krentz's work has been fully supported by Jack Dean Kingsbury's excellent study of the structure of Matthew. *Matthew, Structure, Christology, Kingdom*.

We conclude that the structural test substantiates the unity of the infancy narrative with the remainder of the Gospel.

- 87. See Nineham, *op cit*.
- 88. G. Bornkamm, H.J. Held, G. Barth, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*.
- 89. Charles Thomas Davis, *'Tradition and Redaction in Matthew 1:18-2:23'* p 404-419,

see also Davis, *'The Fulfillment of Creation'* op cit., p513, note 15.

90. The starting point of his argument is that 2:19-21 can be separated from 2:22-23 as representing two different traditions. While 2:22-23 depends upon 2:19-21, the latter does not need to be completed by 2:19-21. In fact, vs. 22 contradicts vs.21, because Joseph was told to go to Judea, not Galilee. Further, vs. 22 emphasises the feelings and motivations of Joseph, while vs 19-22 emphasises the intervention of the angel. In the latter Joseph is passive, in the former (vs. 22-23) he is active. There are linguistic differences. Vs. 19 introduces the angel with a *'genitive absolute giving circumstantial narrative'* which precedes *ιδου*. The angel gives a direct command (vs.20) and Joseph's obedience is narrated in almost the same words (vs.21). In the section vs.22-23, the angels warning is given by an indirect formulation: *χρηματισθεις δε κατ οναρ*. The dramatic element is absent.

Matt.2.22-23, which has thus been distinguished from vs. 19-21 can be shown to parallel Matt. 4.12-17. Both have *Ακουσας δε οτι ...ανεχωρησεν εις..., και ελθων κατωκησεν εις* and *ωα πληρωθη το ρηθεν*...

Both sections have a dependence upon the preceding narrative. In both cases the narrative is influenced by the formula quotation. Further, the geographical reference in 2:2f is reinforced by the similar reference in 4:12f. It can also be demonstrated that Matt 4:12-17 is part of the evangelist's editorial activity. This can be shown from a comparison with Mark. This indicates that Matt.2.22-23 is also redactional.

Once this has been established it leads to the conclusion that Matt.2.12 is redactional, due to its relationship with 22b. Similarly, if 2.19-21 is pre-redactional, then 2.13-15a must also be pre-Matthean. The two passages are identical except for elements of content. Matt.2.16-18 receives its motivation from vs.12, and is not required to link 13-15a with 19-21.

Just as 22-23 pre-supposes 19-21, so 13-15a pre-supposes 9b-11. Further, 13-15a does not require 2.3-9a. But 16-18 does pre-suppose 3-9a. The evidence so far leads to the possibility that 2.3a, 12, 16-18 and 21-23 are redactional, while 9b-11, 13-15 and 19-21 are pre-Matthean. The narrative of 13-15a and 19-21 can read as one continuous story which has as its starting point the events of 9b-11. These results can now be extended into the first chapter. The particular characteristics of 13-15a and 12-21 are also found in 1.18-21 and 1.24-25. In 1.20 the genitive absolute is followed by *ιδου* and again the angel gives a command which is obeyed in almost the same words. Matt.1.1-17 can be shown to be clearly redactional.

For various reasons it can be shown that Matt.21.14-16 is redactional. This passage, however, has clear parallels with 2.1-6. In both a statement of circumstance (21.14 and 2.1-2) is followed by;

- a) participles introducing the reaction of the parties concerned (2.3 *ακουσας δε*, 2.4 *και συναγαγων*, 21.15 - *ιδοντες δε ...κραζοντας*),
- b) a question based upon the circumstance and a reaction to the question, and
- c) an answer based upon O.T. quotation. This means that 2.1-6 is redactional. Further, 2.7-9a follows directly from 2.1-6 and is therefore part of the same redaction. This is supported by the fact that 2.12, which has already been shown to be redactional depends upon vs.8. This means that 1.1-17, 22-23 are redactional while 1.18-21 and 24-25 are pre-redactional.

Having separated the redactional from the pre-Matthean tradition, Davis examines the way in which the formula quotations (which are clearly redactional) are worked into the narrative. Once again there are common characteristics. The pre-Matthean tradition which remains is then found to have the following characteristics;

*First, there is a circumstance introduced by the genitive absolute preceding ἰδοὺ which continues the thought of 2.15 in the same manner that 2.13a continues the thought of vs.11, and vs. 19a continue the thought of vs.15a. Second, the appearance of the Magi is justified by a statement introduced by γὰρ, just as the content of the angel's command was justified in 1.18f; 2.13f; and 2.19 f. The only impediment to this possibility is that the verb "we saw" would of necessity have to be "they saw". That such a change may have been made is very probable, as it appears to have been Matthew who put the question of vs.2b upon the lips of the Magi in order to motivate the redactional section vs.3-9a. Third, the motif of divine guidance so central in the aforementioned traditions is central here also. As Joseph acted in obedience to the angel, so the Magi obediently follow the star. Fourth, this material is characterised by the same lack of interest in person and circumstances which was evident in the traditions already examined. Here as there, the focus is upon the act involved. This alone characterises the actors. Fifth, here also the mother and child are the passive objects of the main action. Davis, 'Tradition and Redaction...' op.cit., p 419.*

The remaining pre-Matthean tradition may be set forth as follows;

*The engendering of Jesus was in this fashion. When his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, before they came together she was discovered to be pregnant. Now Joseph her husband, had decided to divorce her, but after he had reflected upon these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him through a dream saying:*

*"Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which is begotten in her from the Spirit is holy. She shall bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins."*

*Rising from the sleep, Joseph did as the angel of the Lord directed him. He took his wife, and she brought forth a son, and he called his name Jesus.*

*When Jesus was born, behold, Magi from the East appeared; for they had seen his star in the East, and, behold the star had led them until it stood before the place where the child was. And when they had come into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and then, opening their treasures, they gave to him gifts - gold, frankincense, and myrrh. When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph through a dream saying:*

*"Arise, take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and remain there until I speak to you; for Herod is about to seek the child in order to kill him."*

*Rising, he took the child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt. And he was there until the death of Herod. When Herod died, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in Egypt through a dream saying:*

*"Arise, take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for the ones seeking the life of the child have died."*

*Rising, he took the child and his mother, and went into the land of Israel, p 421.*

91. Galilee is seen as a specific part of Israel. He was first told to go to Israel (General). He himself decided to go to that part of Israel which was under Archelaus. But that was too dangerous. So he then received a more specific revelation to go to Galilee (another part of Israel/Judea). So there need be no contradiction between the two revelations. This as against Brown, *Birth, op.cit.*, p 106, though at another point Brown himself recognises that Matthew's geographical references move from the general to the specific (p 217-218).
92. Brown, *Birth, op.cit.*, p 105 note 21, shows that Matthew has a structure of 5 alternating episodes, i.e. Joseph/Herod/Joseph/Herod/Joseph. So 'Herod' is no catchword.
93. For the linguistic information see Goulder, *op.cit.*, p 235-241.  
  
Brown, *op.cit.*, consistently warns against arguing from Matthean terminology because Matthew may have re-worked the tradition, e.g. p 192 note 33; but one must ask, if the pre-Matthean material has been so reworked, whether one can really be at all successful in an attempt to discover the pre-Matthean material.
94. According to Brown, *Birth, op.cit.*, this basic position is taken by Bultmann, Debius, Hirsch and Strecher against Kilpatrick, Soltau and Vaganay (p99). See also Stendahl *School, op.cit.*, p 211. Brown gives three reasons why Matthew added to a pre-Matthean tradition rather than having created the stories as a result of reflecting upon the O.T. Scriptures;

1. It is difficult to see how the O.T. scripture quoted could have led to the story which Matthew gives.
2. The narrative makes good sense if the formula quotations are removed.
3. Matthew's use of the formula quotations where there are synoptic parallels shows that his method was to add already existing material (p 100).

Brown, while agreeing that Matthew did not create the tradition nevertheless believes that the tradition arose, not so much from historical events as a pre-Matthean combination of current midrashic legends based upon the O.T. stories of Joseph, Moses/Pharaoh and Balaam (p 109-119).

95. Martin, *op.cit.*, p 132-186.
96. G.D. Kilpatrick, *op.cit.*, p 59-100.
97. K. Stendahl, *School, op.cit.*, p 11-35.
98. Martin, *op.cit.*, p 132.
99. Bornkamm, Held and Barth, *Tradition and Interpretation, op.cit.*
100. See E. Stewart Petrie *'The Authorship of "The Gospel According to Matthew", A Reconsideration of the External Evidence'*, p 15-30.
101. This 'problem' must admittedly assume the correctness of the two-source theory. This assumption may not be correct. See Charles H. Talbert on the 'significance assault on the "two-source theory" since 1963', in *'Shifting Sands, The Recent Study of the Gospel of Luke'*, p 393.
102. Martin, *op.cit.*, p 134; Bornkamm, Held, Barth, *Tradition and Interpretation, op.cit.*, Sief van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*. The fact that Matthew has accentuated Christ's condemnation of the Pharisees and the Jewish authorities has been evident to redaction critics for some time, e.g. T. Francis Glasson, *'Anti-Pharisaism in St. Matthew'*, p 316-320.

The evidence of tension is discussed by Bornkamm in Bornkamm, Held and Barth, *Tradition and Interpretation, op.cit.*, p 20-24, 26, 31-32, 39. *'Matthew's Gospel confirms throughout that the congregation which he represents had not yet separated from Judaism. ... the struggle with Israel is still within its walls'*, p 50-51; by Barth, *op.cit.*, p 71, 79, 81, 89. On 5.23 and 17.24 he says *'Both sayings are only possible in the situation before the destruction of the Temple.'* p 90. On 24.20 he says *'The severe tension between Church and Judaism in Matthew's Gospel would make this addition intelligible'*, p 92. On 5.10-11; 10.23; 23.34 he says *'It is true that the church in Matthew seeks to keep fellowship with the Jewish nation, but the situation is tense.'* p 111.

This evidence tends to indicate that while the church did form separate Synagogues (assemblies) from the beginning (Acts 11.26; Gal.1.22) much as the Hellenistic Jews had done, it still attempted to remain within Israel as a nation. It was this stance, as being 'within' and yet 'separate' which caused the severe tension.

103. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* p 103-104. The conclusions that are drawn from these signs of tension are not always the same. Van Tilborg *op.cit*, makes an excellent examination of the Matthean use of *υποκριτης*, *πονηροι* and *φονεις*, and shows how they reflect a deep sense of antagonism between the Jewish authorities and the Christian community of Matthew. But the conclusion he draws from his research is to say the least, surprising.

*To my mind there is one conclusion that can be drawn. Matthew lived in a world in which Judaism was no longer a serious competitor. If one wishes to call the Jews who have refused to be converted hypocrites, evil people, murderers and imposters, there must be a fairly great and satisfactory distance on a historical level, (p171).*

This is not logic. Human experience proves exactly the opposite. The more the sense of religious competition, the more the sense of religious antagonism, the more one will find expressions of extreme denunciation. The greater the distance in time, the less the actual threat, the more moderate the sense of disagreement will become. One could quote some lively examples in the history of the church in South Africa. Van Tilborg's excellent work should have led him to exactly the opposite conclusion. The sense of antagonism in Matthew's Gospel indicates a time when the threat of the Jewish authorities was still very real, i.e. a time before A.D. 70.

Douglas R.A. Hare has carefully examined *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew*. He concludes that Matthew's Gospel arose in an environment where the church had already parted company with the Jewish Synagogues and where the Pharisees were in control of the Synagogues (p19-79). The church had become utterly pessimistic about evangelising the Jewish nation (146-149) because their attempts had failed (146-166). The insertion of the Birkath ha Minim into the Synagogue prayer after A.D. 75 shows that this total separation of church and Synagogue only occurred after A.D. 70. This leads him to date the Gospel after A.D.70. We must agree with Hare in his central thesis, namely that the Jewish persecution of Christians in Matthew's church and in the first century in general hardly ever led to death. We also accept his view that persecution rose in intensity during the period of the two wars (i.e. A.D. 69-70 and A.D. 135). However his position does involve a number of problems which make his conclusion on the dating of Matthew questionable.

1. The insertion of the Birkath ha Minim surely indicates the end process of the split between church and synagogue. The beginning of this split must have come much earlier. One wonders in fact whether the church had not left the synagogue some time before A.D. 70, despite the common assumption to the contrary. The book of Acts and the Pauline epistles tend to show that while Christian evangelists entered synagogues to evangelise, the Christian converts formed synagogues (i.e. assemblies) of their own right from the beginning (Acts 11:26; Gal. 1:22 ).

Comments in Matthew about the '*Synagogue across the road*' need not argue for a date after A.D.70. Here one notices that Hare has to reject Raymond Brown's view of the exclusion of Christians from the synagogues in John's Gospel (p 49 note 3).

2. Hare believes that persecution was worse after A.D.70. In order to hold this view he has to minimise evidence of persecution before AD 70. He rejects the historicity of the accounts in Acts and he evades the importance of 1 Thes.2.14-16, p 62-63. One must also question whether Hare has correctly understood the Lucan meaning of peace in Acts 9.31. Does 'peace' mean the absence of persecution?
3. Hare argues that persecution in the diaspora was worse than in Judea. Can this view be sustained in view of the epistle to the Hebrews? Granted that it was written to a Jewish Christian group somewhere in the diaspora, does it not indicate that the temptation was to slide back into Judaism in a time when persecution was now in the past rather than give in to Judaism while under the pressure of persecution? (see F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p xxiii-xxx, xlii-xliv, 266-270). In fact the persecution seems not to have been from Jews at all (Heb.10.32-34). In general this epistle tends to indicate that persecution was worse in the earlier period than the later period, and that it was worse in Judea than in the diaspora.
4. His arguments on the pessimism of Matthew's church are the weakest part of his study. In this section (p 146-149) he gives very little evidence at all. He quotes Matt.228f and 28.19f, which need not indicate what he presumes.

It is interesting to notice in connection with Hare's views that E.L.Abel, who proposes two authors of M, namely Matthew 1 and Matthew 2., places the fiercely anti-pharisaic part of the first Gospel in the section attributed to Matthew, who he believes wrote before AD 70. E.L.Abel, *Who wrote Matthew?* p 143-147.

104. Martin, *op.cit.*, p 135.
105. Martin, *op.cit.*, p 135.
106. R.H. Gundry, *The Language Milieu of First Century Palestine; Its Bearing on the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition*, p 404-408.
107. The belief that the present greek Gospel includes elements that go back to an eye-witness or apostolic deposit is also evidenced in the view taken by E.L.Abel *Who Wrote Matthew?* *op.cit.*, p 138-152. Even if one cannot accept his rather speculative theory of the various stages of redaction one must take note of his reasons for finding early traditions in the first Gospel.
108. Despite all that has been written on the subject it is not really possible to evade the evidence of Papias to the effect that Matthew the apostle, compiled his Gospel in Hebrew (or Aramaic). See Petrie, *op.cit.*, p 15-30.
109. Davis, *'Tradition and Redaction'*, *op.cit.*, p 404.
110. Gundry, *The Use....op.cit.*, believes the first Gospel was written before AD 70, and in Palestine, due to the triple language phenomenon he has discovered in the formal and allusive quotations of the O.T. Here we note that the same linguistic characteristics are evident in the infancy narrative. Of the formal quotation, 1.23 is wholly Septuagintal (p 89-90), 2.6 agrees with both the Septuagint and MT (p 91-93), in 2.15 Matthew translates the MT independently, as he seems to have



done in 2.18 (94-97), and most theories regarding 2.23 must assume some knowledge of Hebrew and Greek (p 97-104). As regards the allusive quotations, 1.21 is independent from the Septuagint and shows targumic influence (p 127-128), 2.1,2 is based on the Septuagint (128-129) as is 2.11 (129-130), 2.13 is an independent rendering of the Hebrew (130), and 2.20, 21 reflects both the Septuagint and the MT, with the latter being more prominent (130-131).

111. Kümmel, *Introduction to the N.T.*, 1970, p 84; R.E. Nixon, *'Matthew' NBC*, p 814, Norman Perrin, *The New Testament, an introduction*, p 172.
112. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction, Gospels and Acts*, p 43-44; F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable?* p 12, 'shortly after AD 70' is a mediating position.
113. J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*
114. J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p 13-30.
115. J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p 97-107.
116. J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p 353.
117. Brown, *Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 45-56.
118. James, the Lord's brother, died in AD 62 as in Eusebius (H.E.3.5.3), quoted in E.L. Abel *'Who Wrote Matthew?'* *op.cit.*, p 141.
119. See Davis, *'Tradition and Redaction'*, *op.cit.*, p 404.
120. One cannot escape from this question by simply restating the parallels between Matthew's narrative and the pattern of O.T. annunciations of birth, as for instance Brown does, *Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 525-526. Such parallels need not show that the O.T. and the midrashic legends created the tradition. They may only have influenced the form and terminology of the tradition. Ellis has argued convincingly for the early existence of written records and authoritative oral tradition in the transmission of the tradition rather than the presence of legendary developments. E.E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, *op.cit.*, p 237-253.
121. Plummer, *op.cit.*, p 2.
122. J.M. Creed, *The Gospel According to Saint Luke*, p 3-4.  
Marshall, *Commentary*, *op.cit.*, p 39-41, and Laurentin, *Structure*, *op.cit.*, p 9.
123. Marshall, *Commentary*, *op.cit.*, p 41-42.
124. Marshall, *Commentary*, *op.cit.*, p 42, this is not a claim to be an eye-witness.
125. Marshall, *Commentary*, *op.cit.*, quoting Shürmann, p 42-43.
126. Creed, *op.cit.*, p 5.  
For a more recent discussion of the prologue, Earle E. Cairns, *'Luke As a Historian'*, p 220-226.
127. Marshall, *Commentary*, *op.cit.*, p 43.

128. Creed, op.cit., p 5.  
Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 44. For a careful examination of the prologue which includes the contemporary discussion see A. J.B. Higgins 'The Preface to Luke and the Kerygma in Acts', p 78-83.
129. Creed, op.cit., p 4.
130. Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 41.
131. Taylor, op.cit., Machen, op.cit.
132. Creed, op. cit., p 13-14, Earle Ellis, *The Gospel According to Luke*, p 71, William Manson, *The Gospel of Luke*, p 10, who merely notes but does not accept the interpolation hypothesis.  
W.R.F. Browning, *The Gospel According to Saint Luke* does not mention it, p40 41, J. Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, rejects it, p 80, as does Raymond Brown, *The Problem of the virginal Conception of Jesus*, p 28, note 72. Also Marshall Commentary. op. cit., p 63.
133. Plummer, op.cit., p 7.
134. Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., makes the following point;

*Nor should the possibility be ignored that in a world which believed in supernatural phenomena it was appropriate for God to act in such a way in order to lead men to belief in Him: it is intellectual snobbery for twentieth-century man to claim that God should reveal Himself in every age only in a way that he thinks proper for his own age (p 51).*

He also notes that these angelic appearances stand or fall with those of the resurrection (p 50). Further he often comments that the reactions to such phenomena in the infancy tradition follow a stereotyped pattern common to all angelic appearances and therefore need not be explained in terms of legendary accretions. If angels do appear then one must expect human reactions to be of a common type.

135. The following words or phrases have been found to be Hebraic:

1:5 *εγενετο* and *εν ταις ημεραις*.

Plummer is aware of the fact that *εγενετο* is typically Lucan. However, he feels this typically Lucan word is a reflection of the influence of Hebrew sources upon Luke. Plummer, op.cit., p ix.

1:6 *εναντιον του Θεου*. Plummer quotes this as Hebraic.

*Πορευομενοι εν πασαις ταις εντολαις και δικαιωμασιν*. Winter points out that though the latter phrase is found in the Septuagint, this verse reflects the exact wording of a phrase found often in the Sadoqite Fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is more likely to reflect a dependence on a Hebrew source than the Septuagint.

1:7 προβηκοτες ενταις ημεραις αυτων

Both Plummer and Winter refer to this. Here Turner's reply, that *εν* is 'inserted' by Luke does not really answer Winter's argument (see p 293f and p 296f ).

1:13 The word play on the name of John and the possible Hebrew underlying *εωηκουσθη* has been ably presented by Rene Laurentin ( p 296 above)..

1:15 *ετι εκ κοιλιας μητρος αυτου.*

Plummer regards this as Lucan, but again in the sense that Luke's usage has been influenced by the Hebrew. He is followed by Creed, *op.cit.*, p 11.

1:17 *επιστρεψαι καρδιας πατερων επι τεκνα.*

Here again it seems to us that Turner's reply is unable to displace Winter's argument, since he has to postulate an imaginary Greek recension which was available to Luke but which has perished ( see p 296 above and references). The same criticism applies to Benoit's objections to this verse.

The same Hebraism is mentioned by Creed. Creed, *op.cit.*, p 11. Marshall accepts the 'probability that a non-LXX text has been used'. *Commentary op.cit.*, p 59 . René Laurentin finds a possible etymological allusion to the name Gabriel if this verse is put back into Hebrew ( see p 296 above). Grundmann finds

a possible Aramaic source reflected in *κατεσκευασμενον*, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p 52.

1:20 *ιδου* - Plummer regards this as a Lucan Hebraism, Plummer, *op.cit.*, p 17 and x.

*μη δυναμενος* - A possible allusion to the name Gabriel in the Hebrew, according to Laurentin ( see p 296 above ) The same would apply to *ουκ εδυνατο* in 1:22.

136. Edersheim, *op.cit.*, p 65-70; Winter, 'Cultural Background', *op.cit.*, p 167 and 236.
137. Ellis, Luke, *op.cit.*, p 65, Brown, Birth, *op.cit.*, p 270, 258-261. See also Gerhard Schneider, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p 45-46.
138. Winter, 'Cultural Background' *op.cit.*,
139. Pierre Benoit, *op.cit.*
140. Winter, 'The Proto-Source...' *op.cit.*, p 199.
141. R. McL. Wilson. *op.cit.*, p 251.
142. Benoit, *op.cit.*, p 179.
143. Edersheim, *op.cit.*, p 20.
144. Dibelius, *op.cit.*, Vielhauer, *op.cit.*, and Grundmann explores this possibility, *op.cit.*, Lukas, p 54-55.
145. Benoit, *op.cit.*

Brown also rejects this theory, 'I find no convincing reason by way of context or by way of theology for such a hypothesis'. Birth, *op.cit.*, p 274, 279, 281-282 .

146. Marshall comments, *'It is more probable that some, possibly the most prominent, members of John's circle became followers of Jesus and amalgamated their traditions with those of the Christian group which they entered'*, Commentary op.cit., p 50. Support for an original Baptist tradition may also be found in Josef Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p 56-63.
147. Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, op.cit., Turner, op.cit., Benoit, op.cit.
148. Brown suggests that the time of the *'evening sacrifice'* (Dan 9:21) has influenced Luke's narrative i.e. that is why Luke placed his angelic appearance at the evening sacrifice. But can we be sure that Luke intended the evening sacrifice, and even if he did, why did he not mention it? Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 27. Laurentin states the link with Daniel in cautious terms, *Structure*, op.cit., p 46-48.
149. Goulder and Sanderson, op.cit.
150. Thus, for instance, because John was the fore-runner of Jesus, and because John's ministry is patterned on that of Elijah, and because this prophecy is found in Malachi, which is immediately preceded by Zechariah in the O.T., the name of John's father must be Zechariah. Then again, the name Zechariah is taken from the Zechariah in 11 Chron. 24:20-22, who was *'the last of the prophets'* (Luke 11:50-51) and who also prophesied under the power of the Spirit (Luke 1:67 f.). So detailed are the *'typologies'* of these scholars that by the time they have finished, all that remains in the narrative which is not derived from the O.T. is the burning of the incense. The name Elizabeth, for instance, is derived from the fact that an Elizabeth was the wife of Aaron. The fact that Elizabeth hid herself for five months is derived from the typology which Luke purportedly sees in the events of Christ's birth and final presentation at the temple. Marshall believes the six months may be a Lucan literary device, but states that *'this is not incompatible with the attribution to Elizabeth of one of the motives suggested namely that she hid herself to avoid reproach to engage in prayer, or to follow her husband's example'*. Commentary op.cit., p 62. If one adds together the six months of Elizabeth's pregnancy prior to her meeting with Mary, the nine months of Mary's pregnancy, and the thirty days between Christ's birth and his purification, one arrives at a total of seventy weeks, the period of Daniel's prophecy. The time between the *'going forth of the word'* (Dan. 9.25; Luke 1.44f) and the *'coming of the anointed one'* to the temple (Dan. 9.15; Lk. 3.22f) is seventy weeks.
151. Goulder and Sanderson. op.cit., p 12.
152. R. McL. Wilson, op.cit., p 251.  
Commenting on Goulder and Sanderson on this subject, Brown, *Birth* op.cit., says, *'One can never dispose of such a theory, but it demands remarkable ingenuity and faith to explain many factors'* (p 265-266 and note 6), and commenting on the theory about the use of the 490 days, Brown regards this as eisegesis rather than exegesis (p 282 and note 60.). In this sense Brown rejects the more radical form of the midrashic theory. However his historical conclusions are hardly less radical. He regards the names of John's parents, and the fact that they were Levites, as *'historical information'* but deduces from the fact that Luke has used his prophetic call narrative that his story is basically created from the O.T. parallels (p 498, note 2 and p 283).
153. Goulder and Sanderson, op.cit., p 29-30.
154. Orr, op.cit., p 65-67.
155. Gerard Meagher, *'The Prophetic Call Narrative'*, p 164-177.
156. Gerard Meagher, op.cit., p 166. For a different analysis see Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., table viii.

157. We cannot therefore accept the outright statement of Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., regarding the similarity between the angel in Daniel and Luke 1 that *'there can be no doubt that in this description of Gabriel's appearance Luke intends to evoke the atmosphere of Daniel'* (p 270). In fact we will always remain in doubt and we can never be sure of Luke's actual intentions.
158. The conclusion we have come to agrees substantially with the balanced comment of Howard Marshall, *Commentary*, op.cit., p 51;

*...the historicity of the present narrative cannot be positively established since the origin and transmission of the tradition is obscure. Equally, however, the possibility of a historical basis to the narrative cannot be denied, since we have no historical knowledge that contradicts it.*

Much the same conclusion can be found in the works of Geldenhuys, Harrington and Ellis.

Ellis, op.cit., p 65.

Geldenhuys, op.cit., p 72-73.

Wilfrid J. Harrington, *The Gospel According to Saint Luke*, p 36-37.

159. The parallelism may be tabulated as follows;

#### Luke 1:11-20

1:11

*And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.*

1:12

*And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.*

1:13a

*'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard.*

1:13b

*and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.*

#### Luke 1:28-38

1:28

*'Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you.'*

1:29

*But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.*

1:30

*And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.*

1:31

*And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.*

1:14-17

*And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth; for he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord, a people prepared.'*

1:18

*And Zechariah said to the angel, 'How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.'*

1:19

*And the angel answered him, 'I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news.'*

1:20-23

*And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.' And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, and he made signs to them and remained dumb. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.*

1:32-33

*He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.'*

1:34

*And Mary said to the angel, 'How shall this be, since I have no husband?'*

1:35

*And the angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called Holy, the Son of God.'*

1:36

*And, behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.'*

1:63-64

And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, 'His name is John.' And they all marvelled. And immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God.

See Laurentin, *Structure*, op.cit., p 32.

1:38

And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord: let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her.

160. Brown, *Birth* op.cit., comments,

*In the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist we heard of a yearning and prayer on the part of the parents who very much wanted a child: but since Mary is a virgin who has not yet lived with her husband, there is no yearning for or human expectation of a child - it is the surprise of creation. No longer are we dealing with human request and God's generous fulfilment: this is God's initiative beyond anything man or woman dreamed of (p 314).*

161. Brown explains the reply of Zechariah by the fact that Luke was dependent upon the Danielic pattern. *'The literary pattern virtually required a sign, and the parallel with Daniel suggested the sign of being dumb struck'*, *Birth*, op.cit., p 280. He rather ridicules the church fathers for castigating Zechariah for his unbelief. However Brown seems to have missed the subtlety of the contrasts that are drawn between Mary and Zechariah.

162. Laurentin, *Structure*, op.cit., p 33-38.

We can never be sure exactly how many of these contrasts were apparent to the author himself. However, the overall pattern is unmistakable. This leads the reader to enquire if there are perhaps further contrasts in the narrative outside of this formal structure. These then become apparent. John's parents are *δικαιως* before the Law. Mary is the object of divine grace. Zechariah is a priest. Mary is an unknown girl in a despised village. John's parents are *'advanced in years'*. Mary is an unmarried virgin. At John's birth the neighbours rejoice (1:58). At Jesus' birth the angels sing (2:14). Harold S. Songer, *'Luke's Portrayal of the Origins of Jesus'*, p 456-457. We shall not at this moment draw out the implications of this contrast. The significance will become apparent when we enquire into its teaching.

163. The six points of Gerard Meagher's research can be equally applied here:-

- (i) The divine confrontation - 1:26-27
- (ii) The introductory word - 1:28-30
- (iii) The commission - 1:31-33
- (iv) The objection - 1:34
- (v) The reassurance - 1:35
- (vi) The sign - 1:36-37

164. Brown, *Birth* op.cit., maintains that the annunciation to Mary is simpler and concludes that the annunciation to Zechariah must have been modelled on the annunciation to Mary (p 293). Unfortunately all the structures which modern

scholars find in the narrative, (including our own) run the risk of being imposed upon the narrative. In this analysis (above) the Marian annunciation is not particularly simpler or more involved than the one to Zechariah. Where Brown finds the manner of the conception, the description of the child's future, and the portrait of Mary in vs. 34 and 38 to be the unparalleled material, our analysis leads to the conclusion that Mary's response is more significant ( p 292-296). Brown does accept the importance of Mary's response in another context ( p 316-319).

165. Minear, *'Luke's Use'* op.cit., p 111-130.
166. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 296-298.
167. Marshall comes to the conclusion that there is a mutual dependence between the two stories, *Commentary* op.cit., p 63. This would tend to suggest that they come from the same basic mould and points to an earlier tradition.
168. Winter, *Main Literary Problem of the Lucan Infancy Narrative*; p 26.
169. Marshall, *Commentary*, op.cit., p 63.  
He seems to hold that neither narrative has been derived from the other. The implication is that the structure of both narratives is earlier than the Lucan redaction.
170. Brown, *Birth* op.cit., uses the structure of the two annunciations to come to almost the opposite conclusion (p 292-298). As with the Matthean narrative one should distinguish between the use of O.T. literary structure, terminology and analogies in the narration of an historical tradition, and the creation of the tradition on the basis of such O.T. materials. The latter may conceivably have taken place, but it is over hasty to come to this conclusion as soon as such O.T. materials are discovered. The former explanation may be just as valid. Brown seems to assume that the latter is more probable than the former: *'such perfect adherence to literary form raises a question about the historicity of the stereotyped features in the Lucan story'* (p 296). The only alternative for Brown is that *'one may argue that the annunciation pattern really reflects a reasonable way of procedure'*. Surely a better alternative is that the annunciation pattern reflects a traditional way of procedure (prophetic call narrative or O.T. revelation narrative), which any biblico-Palestinian influenced community or individual would automatically have used to narrate any angelic revelation story. The use of such a traditional form need not especially support or deny the historicity of the story. To us it may be taken to give support to the tradition. The same would apply to the use of Christian post-resurrection terminology in the Lucan infancy narratives (see Brown, p 316 on Mary's response in 1.38 being modelled on Luke's account of her in the ministry of Jesus - p 316-319).

In a structuralist analysis of *'Commissioning Stories in Luke-Acts'*, B.J. Hubbard shows how the structure of the commissioning stories in the O.T. and in Luke-Acts are part of a larger structure common to most ancient oriental cultures. In his analysis he includes the following narratives in Luke-Acts; Paul's conversion ( Ac.9.1-9), the resurrection appearances ( Lk.24.36-53), the Angelology to the apostles ( Ac.5.17-21), to Ananias (9.10-17), to Cornelius (10.18), to Peter ( 10.9-23), Paul at Corinth ( 18.9-11), and Paul on the way to Malta (27.21-26). Are we to argue then, that because all these narratives are part of a structure common to the ancient orient in general, and because most of the commission-



ing stories in pagan religions of the orient are non-historical, that the conversion of Paul and the resurrection appearances are similarly non-historical? Is it not far more reasonable to suppose that the narration of a story in a particular form need not determine its historicity either positively or negatively? See B.J.Hubbard, *op.cit.*, p 103 - 123.

171. 1:26, 35

26 Γαβριηλ

35 δυναμις υψιστου επισκιασει

Both Paul Winter ( see p 293f above) and Rene Laurentin ( see p 296 above) regard this as reflecting a typical word play on the name 'Gabriel' in the Hebrew. The angel's name is typically reflected in the message he brings.

1:30 εὔρες γὰρ χάριν παρὲ τῷ Θεῷ.

Plummer regards the phrase as Hebraic (Gen 6:8), Plummer, *op.cit.*, p 22-23.

1:32 μεγας

Laurentin regards this as reflecting a possible play on the name 'Gabriel' (see p 296 above).

1:32,35 υιος υψιστου , δυναμις υψιστου

1:78 ανατολη εξ υψους

The equivalent has been attested at Qumran in Aramaic (4Q243) and a recently translated text may show a number of parallels with Luke 1:32-35. Marshall *Commentary*, *op.cit.*, p 67. This argues for the Palestinian background to the narrative. Laurentin believes 1:32,35 have an indirect play on the name 'Mary'. The 'son of the Most High', born by the 'power of the Most High', is finally the one who 'rises' from on High. 'Rises', ανατολη, may be a play on Mary's name. Hence by implication the build-up to this play on her name has already begun in the message which she received from the angel ( see p 296 above).

1:33 βασιλευσει επι

Winter regards this as a possible Hebraism but does not place too much weight upon it (p 293f above). This is noted by Marshall (*Commentary*, *op.cit.*, p 72) though he does not commit himself.

1:37 ουκ αδυνατησει παρα του θεου παν ρημα.

Winter is more certain that this is a Hebraism ( p 293f above).

Plummer had already drawn attention to this Hebraism. Plummer, *op.cit.*, p 25-26.

172. Plummer, *op.cit.*, p 23-24.

173. Turner, *op.cit.*

174. Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, *op.cit.*, p97-101, 199-218.

175. Evidence of a Hebraic tradition seems clear. A Hebrew source document must always remain in the realm of conjecture.

176. W.J. Harrington, a Roman Catholic commentator, strongly advocates that Luke was influenced by Zeph 3:14-17. He notes that in such a Semitically coloured narrative the appearance of the Greek greeting formula; *χαιρε* is unusual. However, this he believes is readily explained as we notice how much Luke is influenced by Zeph. 3:15-17. The *χαιρε* comes from the Septuagintal 'Rejoice Daughter of Zion; sing aloud, Daughter of Jerusalem'. The angel goes on to comfort Mary by telling her that she will conceive *εν γαστρι*. This Harrington takes as an echo of the twice repeated *beqirbeh* in the Hebrew text of Zeph. 3. 15 - 17. 'The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst' and 'The Lord, your God, is in your midst'.

in both cases 'midst' is beqirbeh in Hebrew which can equally be translated 'womb', Harrington, *Luke*, op.cit., p 45-47. The use of the Hebrew was suggested by Laurentin, *Structure*, op.cit., p 65-70. Support for Luke's allusion to this verse is the belief that Luke's theology takes up the concept of the 'Daughter of Zion' in O. Testament texts and applies it to Mary as the representative of Israel and the people of God. Her rejoicing symbolises the rejoicing of God's remnant. Their rejoicing is to be found throughout the Lucan infancy narrative, and indeed throughout his Gospel. Incidentally, it is worth noting that if this allusion is acceptable there is further evidence of the Hebraic nature of this pericope. The Septuagintal translation of Zeph. 3:15, 17 does suggest the meaning of 'womb'. The difficulty we have in accepting this allusion is the fact that this interpretation is particularly dear to Roman Catholic exegetes (though of course Protestant scholars also refer to it) and one wonders whether the evidence itself is quite as obvious as is often made out. It is questionable whether Luke actually had this text in mind when he wrote this pericope. As we shall see Luke 1:31 can also be explained by other texts which bear a closer correspondence. It certainly remains a plausible suggestion, but not too much weight can be placed on it.

Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., rejects it because the 'virgin Israel' in O.T. texts is often one who is raped and defiled (Jer. 31: 3-4), therefore 'the echoes of the "virgin" passages concerning Zion and Israel in the O.T. are quite inappropriate as background to Luke's description of the virgin Mary' (p320-321 and 321-327). On this point as on the others, it would be wise to be conservative about how much Marian symbolism Luke intended in the relatively stereotyped salutation of 1:28, (p327). Marshall comments;

*It is just possible that the use of χαίρω in the LXX of these passages has influenced the present verse and the continuation of Zc. 9.9 is certainly relevant here. But a typological identification of Mary with the daughter of Zion is nowhere explicit, and it would tend to distract from the coming Messiah to the mother. Commentary, op.cit., p 65.*

177. Goulder and Sanderson find the following typological references. The angels greeting 'Hail, O favoured one', (1:28) is taken from the angels statement to Daniel 'you are greatly beloved' (Dan. 10:23). The second half of the verse 'the Lord is with you' is taken from Judges 6:12. Luke 1:31 follows Isa. 7:14 and Gen. 16:11f. Luke 1:32,33 closely follows Isa.9:6,7. The reference to the 'overshadowing' of God's power in Luke 1:35 is taken from the reference to the 'Shekinah' in Ex 40:34 (they quote v.29, which is perhaps a printing error). Mary's response to the 'handmaid' of the Lord comes from Hannah's prayer (1 Sam 1:11). The name 'Son of the Most High' in Luke 1:32 comes from the Davidic promise in 2 Sam. 7:14.

178. The work of these two scholars has been taken further by C.T. Ruddick who advocates the view that Luke has structured his whole narrative upon Genesis in order to show the correspondence between Christ's 'Genesis' and the biblical Genesis. He suggests that Luke may have wanted to write a Christian Torah to replace or supplement the pentateuch and that the infancy narrative may have developed in a series of homilies preached in the primitive Christian assemblies. He therefore follows the above mentioned scholars in their midrashic or Haggidic theory. Ruddick finds verbal correspondences with Genesis from Luke 1:26 to Luke 2:51, C.T. Ruddick, *Birth Narratives in Genesis and Luke*, p 343-348.

179. It has many similarities with the popular belief in 'Bible numerics' where the num-

erical value of the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible are found to be inundated with patterns of seven and three. For many this amounts to an indubitable proof of the inspiration of scripture. As Montgomery notes, mathematicians have shown that the same method could be used to prove the inspiration of the daily newspapers. John Warwick Montgomery, *Principalities and Powers*, op.cit., p 92.

180. Benoit, op.cit.
181. Though even here it is not certain whether Luke 1:32-33 is closer to Isa 9:6-7 or Sam 7: 9-16, or whether the Lucan text is a free composition merely using the traditional Davidic terminology in a number of O.T. texts. Brown discusses 2 Sam 7: 9-16, Isa 9:5-7 (p 310 note 39), Ps 2:7, '*passages in the prophets*' and the Qumran meditations on 2 Sam 7:11-14 (p 310-311). This adds to the impression that Luke was very seldom influenced by a single text. Rather he was using stock O.T., intertestamental and Jewish terminology to heighten the biblical colouring of his narrative. *Birth*, op.cit.
182. Brown, *Birth* op.cit., completely rejects an allusion to Isa 7:14, p 300.
183. Harrington, *Commentary*, op.cit. p 48.
184. Harrington, *Commentary*, op.cit., p 48-49, Joseph Gewiess, '*Mary's question to the angel*', p 39-42.  
Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, '*The Virginal Conception of Jesus in the New Testament*', p 567-568; Brown p 303-306, *Birth*. op.cit. See also Marshall *Commentary*, op. for a scholarly rejection of this idea, p 63, 69. See Johannes B. Bauer, '*Philologische Bemerkungen zu Lk. 1.34*', p 535-540 for a discussion of the tenses involved in the grammatical possibilities.
184. Harrington, *Commentary*, op.cit., p 48-49, Joseph Gewiess, '*Mary's question to the angel*', p 39-42.  
Joseph A. Fitzmyer, '*The Virginal Conception of Jesus in the New Testament*', p 567-568; Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 303-306. Also Marshall, *Commentary*, op.cit., for a scholarly rejection of this idea, p 63 and p 69.
185. Note for instance the summary rejection by Brown. *Birth*, op.cit., p 289 and 306. For a study of the various ancient translations of Lk. 1.31 see Hans Quecke, '*Lukas 1.31 in den alten Übersetzungen*', p 333-348. He makes no particular conclusion.
186. '*The words are the avowal of a maiden conscious of her own purity; and they are drawn from her by the strange declaration that she is to have a son before she is married.*' Plummer, op.cit., p 24.
187. Brown's rejection of *ἐν* being non-Lucan, *Birth*, op.cit., (p 289) and his rejection of the theory that a pre-Lucan narrative did not contain the virginal conception (301-303). He rejects Taylor's argument (p 302-303).
188. Brown's (*Birth*, op.cit.) two categories in this discussion (a) psychological explanation and (b) literary explanation (p 303-309) do not allow for the explanation we have given. Neither does he mention the historical influence of the interpolation hypothesis as a cause for the preoccupation with Mary's question in subsequent discussions. Marshall gives five views that have been propounded. He summarily rejects the theory that *παρθενος* could mean '*a girl who had not yet begun to menstruate*' and the belief that Mary had understood the angelic revelation in terms of Isa. 7.14. He also rejects the argument from the tense of the original Hebrew. He believes the literary device theory may be correct but notes that it is not strictly necessary '*since v.35 could follow straight from v.33 (or v.31) with a linking γὰρ*'. *Commentary* op.cit., p 70.

189. *When the account is read in and for itself without the overtones of the Matthean annunciation to Joseph - every detail in it could be understood of a child to be born of Mary in the normal human way, a child endowed with God's special favour born at the intervention of the Spirit of God and destined to be acknowledged as the heir to David's throne as God's Messiah and Son. Fitzmyer, 'The Virginal Conception', op.cit., p 567.*
190. 'A Lucan stage prop for the dramatisation of the identification of the child.' Fitzmyer, 'The Virginal Conception', op.cit., p 567.
191. Brown, 'Luke's Description of the Virginal Conception', p 360-362.
192. Brown makes this point, Birth, op.cit., p 298-299, 301 note 14. Machen, Virgin Birth, op.cit., also noted this much earlier. While the strict use of parthenos is not as important for Matthew's narrative it does seem that Luke uses the word in the sense of 'virgin'. See Jean Carmignac. 'The Meaning of Parthenos in Lk.1,27: A Reply to C.H. Dodd', p 327-330; H.M. Orlinsky; The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible (p 939-940); Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 64, 'παρθενος means a young, unmarried girl, and carries the implication of virginity. In view of 1.34 this implication is undoubtedly present here, a view which is strengthened by the probable allusion to Isa.7.14 here and in v.31'. His argument, like Carmignac, is therefore from context.
193. This is substantially one of Brown's two arguments for accepting that Luke did intend to narrate a virginal conception, Birth, op.cit., p 300-301.
194. Lobstein, op.cit., and p 24-27 above.
195. Plummer, op.cit., p 24-25.
196. Harrington, Commentary, op.cit., p 50.
197. Plummer, op.cit., p 25. Or as Marshall comments: 'κελεομαι usually follows the predicate', Commentary, op.cit., p 71
198. διο, 'wherefore, introducing the result', Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 71.
199. Plummer, op.cit., p 25. Marshall comments on 'holy': 'Here the sense is "divine" (Ps.89.5,7) or "Gottgehorig"', Commentary, op.cit., p 71.
200. Brown is perhaps overreacting to his Catholic background when he rejects this allusion (p 327-328). Certainly he is correct in rejecting a strong affirmation on the part of Luke that Mary became the tabernacle of God. The emphasis is not on the tabernacle but on what filled the tabernacle. Birth, op.cit., p 327-328.
201. Jeffrey G. Soboson, when speaking of René Laurentin's valuable work on this subject has this to say;

*In Old Testament usage when "great" refers to a person it is used as a qualified adjective "a man of great stature" 2 Sam. 21:20, or with a subordinate clause to show one's greatness as relative, as: "Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants*

and in the sight of the people" (Ex.11.3). When the word "great" however is used as an attribute without any adjunct, it is reserved to God alone. Jeffrey G. Soboson, 'Completion of Prophecy, Jesus in Lk. 1.32-33' p 318.

202. Brown comments 'Luke is certainly using "Son of God" in a proper sense in 1.35d, but he is not necessarily saying what Ignatius said twenty or thirty years later: "Our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived of Mary".' Birth, op.cit., p 316 note 56. By 'proper' Brown means that the Sonship is more than the O.T. adoption of the Davidic monarch in the enthronement ceremony. 'Son' is being used in the sense in which it is used in Rom. 1.4. See also Laurentin, Structure, op.cit., p 36-37.
203. Marshall, Luke, Historian, op.cit., p 168. For a detailed support of the 'transcendant', elements in the Christology of Lk. 1-2 see Laurentin, Structure, op.cit., p 121-129.
204. Pannenberg, Jesus God and Man, op.cit.
205. Plummer, op.cit., p 21.
206. Creed, op.cit., p 16-17. Similarly Marshall 'Had the phrase been meant to refer to Mary, it would have had to be differently constructed.' Commentary, op.cit., p 64.
207. For a similar conclusion see Laurentin, Structure, op.cit., p 112-116, or Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 287-288.
208. Orr, op.cit., p 190-203.
209. Boslooper, op.cit.
210. Allen, op.cit., p 10. D. Daube has proposed that there might be a trace of the idea of the virgin birth in a midrash on Moses' birth. David Daube, The N.T. and Rabbinic Judaism, p 5-9.
211. Dale Moody. 'The Miraculous Conception'. Cyrus H. Gordon, 'Paternity at two levels' p 101.
212. Karl Rahner defines a theologumenon as,

*a statement which makes a theological assertion that cannot be immediately considered as an official teaching of the church, or as a dogmatic proposition that is binding in faith, but rather that is first of all the result and expression of a striving for an understanding of faith through the establishment of connections between binding faith-statements and the confrontation of (then with) the dogmatic thinking of a person (or a given period). Fitzmyer, 'The Virginal Conception' op.cit., p 548 note 26.*

At this point we should note the comment of Marshall, 'Discussion of the issue is often bedevilled by the assumption that we are dealing with a theologumenon rather than a historical fact, and hence the assumption that there must be some religionsgeschichtlich parallel which will explain the origin of the idea', Commentary, op.cit., p 73.

213. See below p 173-178.

214. Lobstein's hypothesis, as has been stated in the second chapter (Lobstein, op.cit., p 72-76) is basically as follows: The early disciples first believed in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. They then came to see him in terms of the resurrection, as the exalted Lord of the kerygma. Then thirdly they were led to the metaphysical belief in the pre-existent Logos who became incarnated in Jesus Christ. Somewhere between the second and third Christologies the idea of the virgin birth was developed. Another postulation which is similar is that the disciples first believed that Jesus was the Son of God after the resurrection (Rom 1:4). They then pushed this back logically to the transfiguration, then the baptism, then the birth and conception, then the pre-existence or eternal generation of the Son. Once again the virgin birth comes somewhere between the resurrected Lord and the pre-existent Logos. Brown has well stated this hypothesis;

*the silence of the rest of the New Testament enhances the possibility of the theologoumenon theory whereby somewhere in the 60's one or more Christian thinkers solved the Christological problem by affirming symbolically that Jesus was God's son from the moment of his conception. According to the theory they used an imagery of the virginal conception whose symbolic origins were forgotten as it was disseminated among various Christian communities and recorded by the Evangelist. Brown, 'The Problem of the Virginal Conception of Jesus', op.cit., p 29.*

For the theologoumenal view see also Schneider, op.cit., p 52-53.

The similarities between this view and that of Paul Lobstein's are obvious. We hear again of the attempt to 'solve the Christological problem'. The hypothesis has not basically changed. The terminology used today differs somewhat from Lobstein's and the hypothesis has been refined. It is also significant that Brown puts his finger on the crucial question that the advocates of this hypothesis must answer: that of dating. He speaks of 'sometime in the 60's.' This was the same question which was asked by Orr (see p 185-187 above). The basic problem then has not changed. The issue must be discussed in the modern context. Presuming that the virgin birth is a theologoumenon, and not historical, the issue must be analysed as follows; It seems to us to be self-evident that a theologoumenon could not have developed in the Palestinian Church while the family of Jesus was still alive. If someone had postulated such an idea the very first thing that would have happened is that the family would have been consulted. It also seems to be self-evident to us that the idea could not have developed while the apostles were influential in the church. It is very difficult to believe that the apostle John did not at some time discuss the birth of Jesus with Mary. This excludes the early period of church history altogether. But the question is, how long did this early period of Christ's family and apostolic influence last? If Mary was young when Jesus was born, and if Jesus was born in B.C. 6, Mary would have been 46 or at the most 50 by the time of the crucifixion. She may conceivably have lived till A.D. 60. She probably was still alive in A.D. 50. Her sons, and Christ's half-brothers would have been younger than Jesus. They would have been roughly between 25 and 30 by the time of the crucifixion. They would probably have lived up until A.D. 60 and possibly A.D. 70. Now it could just be possible that they were ignorant about the circumstances of Christ's birth; though we find this difficult to believe. If they had come to believe in Jesus as the early church did, the fascination of his birth would have driven them to enquire at some stage. But granted their ignorance, we may be able to discount their influence. (Note: we are not discussing their general leadership in the church - if it existed - but

their influence as sources of information.) John and the apostles remain a problem. How long did John live? If the tradition of the early church is correct, then the advocates of this hypothesis are presented with a pressing problem. He may have been still alive in AD 80. However, to give the benefit of the doubt, let us suppose that he also died before AD 70. On this basis the idea of the virgin birth must at least have arisen after AD 60 and, more probably, after AD 70. Paul's role in this question cannot be avoided. Now it is the essential belief of this hypothesis that Paul was ignorant of this doctrine. Brown makes this clear, as does Fitzmyer. It is frequently stressed that had he known about it some references would have appeared in his writings. We question this logic. However, those who hold this hypothesis must be consistent and explain the origin of the tradition in terms of their own assumptions. Paul's writings cover the period roughly between AD 50 and AD 64 (depending on one's dating of 1 Thes., and Galatians and depending on one's view of the authorship and dating of the pastoral epistles, these dates will fluctuate slightly). This excludes the origin of this tradition before AD 64. Many scholars today accept that 'Luke', whoever he was, was a companion of Paul. If Paul was ignorant of this tradition it follows that Luke must have been ignorant of it as well up until AD 64. All this leads to the conclusion that the tradition must have developed after AD 60 at least, if not after AD 70, thus Brown's remark about *'Sometime in the 60's'*.

There is a further problem. The general consensus is that John (or the author of the fourth gospel and the Johannine theology in general) was also ignorant of this tradition. This again is a vital assumption for those who hold to this hypothesis. There is also a general consensus that the Johannine corpus is to be dated somewhere between AD 80 and AD 100. This, it would seem, would exclude the origin of the tradition from the first century altogether. We must face this as a legitimate conclusion. However, there may be a way to escape this implication. John (or the authors) may have been ignorant of the Synoptic tradition, though recent scholarship is tending to doubt this once more. There is then just a possibility that the tradition originated after AD 60/70 without John's knowledge. We must admit though that this is only a possibility, and one which is hard-pressed at that. A simple answer would be to exclude the origin of this tradition from the first century altogether. Consequently, the hypothesis would collapse due to the obvious Lucan authorship of Luke 1:11. Granted that there may still be room in the first century for the development of this hypothesis, it must have been of later origin, i.e. after AD 70, just possibly after AD 64. This means that this present pericope in Luke 1:26-38 must in many of its essential elements depend upon a later tradition. Due to the contrasting parallelism the entire content of the first chapter and certain verses in the second and third chapters must also depend upon a later tradition. But as we have seen, it is very difficult for various reasons, to reject the early Palestinian Christian origin of these narratives. This means that those who hold to the theologoumenon hypothesis are forced to retreat into an interpolation hypothesis of some kind. The best position is still that of Taylor, that Luke himself added the tradition of the virgin birth to the tradition he had received after AD 60-70. But we have already noted that this excision of various 'late' elements from the earlier tradition destroys the structure of the narratives. We have also noted that one cannot separate the content of the narratives from their structure. Incidentally, it now becomes apparent why Luke 1:34 became a problem to certain scholars. According to this hypothesis such verses must be regarded as later additions. Lastly, we have noted that the interpolation hypothesis advocated by Taylor did not bear up under Machens scrutiny and is no longer strongly advocated.

Throughout our discussion we have been giving the benefit of the doubt to the advocates of this position. Various assumptions had to be made all along the way. We must now note that if one of these benefits is removed, if one of these assumptions is incorrect, the hypothesis is placed in a most embarrassing position. If Jesus' brothers did know about his '*natural birth*', and if they did not die before A.D. 70; if John or some of the apostles did not die before A.D. 60-70; if *John* was not ignorant of the synoptic tradition and Luke's gospel in particular; if the interpolation hypothesis is wrong; if it is not possible to dissociate early tradition from late tradition in Lk. 1-2; or finally if Lk. 1-2 does reflect an early tradition, this hypothesis becomes quite unacceptable. To this one may add Laurentin's persuasive reasons for showing a definite link between the theological method of Luke in the infancy narrative and that of Paul and John in the prologue, *Structure*, op.cit., p 131-140, 146-147.

Further we may add a difficulty mentioned by Brown, namely, the charge of illegitimacy. *Birth*, op.cit., p 32-33. There are two aspects to it. Firstly were those who first initiated the idea not aware of the problem it might cause amongst the Jews who were opposed to Christianity? This needs some explaining, if indeed it can be explained. Secondly, the Gospels seem to bear witness to a rumour of irregularity in the life of Jesus. Even if this is not historical, even if it is derived from later tradition, it seems to be as early as the Markan (Mk. 6:3) tradition. This means it already existed before A.D. 60-70. But then where did it come from? It cannot have come from those who initiated the tradition of the virgin birth after A.D. 60-70. The only conclusion is to believe that the rumour was based upon valid evidence. Are the scholars who advocated this hypothesis ready to go where their argument leads them? Brown *Birth*, op.cit., p 142-143 asks why, if the story was created was it not written in a way that would avoid misunderstanding. The way it is written is better explained if the story is based upon '*historical fact*.'

What probability is there that all if these *if's* are invalid? We must admit very little! For these reasons we reject this hypothesis. It is at least as difficult to believe as the traditional view, and to many, far more difficult to believe. From the historical point of view acceptance of the virgin birth is not unreasonable granted the possibility of the Incarnation. Marshall *Commentary* op.cit., p 70. This is provided of course that one does not reject the possibility of a virginal conception on a priori rationalistic or historicistic grounds. In the previous chapter we have indicated why such an approach to history is unacceptable.

215. The anthropological discussion in current literature has revolved around a long-standing disagreement between two leading anthropologists. E. Leach and M. Spiro. As a result of two articles by these authors an extended discussion has taken place in reaction to the two positions. Unfortunately very little of the subsequent discussion is relevant to the subject from a theological or historical point of view.

The basis of Leach's address is a comparison between the beliefs of Australian aborigines and Christian belief in the virginal conception. His starting point is the supposed fact that Australian aborigines '*believe*' that children are born through a spirit entering into the mothers womb, while they '*know*' in fact that conception takes place after copulation. From this he deduces that the scholar must not take at face value what people say they believe. Rather the belief has a structural value. It says something about the particular social institution in which the participants live. People '*believe*' dogmatically that which runs counter to their '*knowledge*' for two basic reasons. They may as Christian believers, know that conception operates in a certain way, but believe that in this case God has suspended the casual law of nature, or they believe in something as an expression of a particular social structure. Leach's interest lies in the latter. Approaching the Christian belief with



these assumptions he notes firstly that the gospel writers, while 'believing' in the virginal conception, nevertheless 'know' that Jesus was born in the ordinary way because they give Jesus' Davidic lineage through Joseph. This 'belief' cannot therefore be taken at face value. This means that its importance is not its supposed factuality, but its structural implication. Leach explains this belief in terms of a patriarchal social system, and in terms of a particular kind of society which sees men in alliance with the gods, normality in conjunction with abnormality, and where this

*disjunction between two worlds is also accompanied by a social experience of continuity and mediation. Dogmas and beliefs in virginal conception have ways of expressing this experience. John A. Saliba, 'The Virgin; Birth Debate in Anthropological Literature: A Critical Assessment', p 432.*

As regards this particular belief he proposes that it comes in three forms:

1. Supernatural/natural/natural - The conception is virginal (i.e. supernatural) but thereafter both the mother and child are normal.
2. Supernatural/natural/supernatural - The conception and the child (some hero) are unnatural, while the mother is natural.
3. Supernatural/supernatural/supernatural - Where conception, mother and child are supernatural. Strangely he places the Christian belief in the third category.

Various points are immediately apparent. Firstly it seems that Leach has misunderstood both the Australian Aborigines and the Christians. Melford Spiro shows that the Aborigines were definitely not aware of the physiological manner of conception. Their belief has to be taken at face value. Leach's view of the gospels is one which is held by some theologians. J.M.D. Derrett, one of the participants in the anthropological discussion, is a theologian who takes this view. However in this present study reasons have been given for rejecting this interpretation, and a great number of modern Christians certainly believe in a literal virginal conception. Further, Leach has not placed the Christian belief in the correct category. He seems to have confused the belief of the authors of the gospels with the later ideas of the immaculate conception and the perpetual virginity of the virgin Mary. If anything the N.T. belief should be placed in the second category, though even this is unsatisfactory. The Christian position would best be expressed as supernatural/natural/supernatural-natural (or /natural-supernatural). However even the terminology is problematic. The dichotomy between natural and supernatural is neither truly biblical (in the Hebraic - O.T. view of nature) nor scientific. This false nature - supernature dichotomy leads him to see the Christian belief as a suspension of natural causality. We may reply that the Christian belief, at its best, does not operate with such categories, and that we are not even sure if the modern philosophy of science operates with a rigid idea of natural causality (see chapter 3, especially on Karl Popper). This leads to the observation that two scholars can never come to an agreement if they operate with totally different world views. The definition of the biblical world view, as one in which men are in alliance with the gods, and in which the normal is set in dialectical relation to the abnormal, raises the question of whether Leach's own world view is a case of materialistic metaphysics. Such a world view

will always lead one to define any openness to the transcendent as '*an alliance between man and the gods*', with the rather primitive connotations inherent in that phrase.

The most important observation is that Leach's study runs into the danger of total irrelevance. If it does not really deal with the Christian position, but a caricature of it, then all his statements are quite irrelevant. John A. Saliba notes that many of the anthropological contributions suffer from this problem. He concludes at the end of his survey that anthropology in general does not face the historical question, but rather avoids it. This leads to a further observation. Leach's work suffers because it evades the question of facticity and involves itself rather with the question of meaning or significance in an area which is totally unrelated to the area of facticity. J.M.D. Derett is in agreement with Leach on this issue. He believes that the question of the '*Religious meaning*' of the '*religious symbol*' which is expressed by the idea of the virginal conception is important. This can be linked to the whole concept of a theologoumenon, and reminds us of the Kantian distinction between facts and meaning which we rejected in the previous chapter. The problem of the theologoumenal approach thus becomes clear when it is found to be very similar to an anthropological approach which finally becomes totally irrelevant. This is exactly the same problem that confronts all those who wish to distinguish between fact and meaning, *Historie* and *Geschichte*, the resurrection as an object of historical enquiry, and the resurrection as the central '*symbol*' of the Christian faith.

In response to Leach, Melford Spiro gives various criticisms of his position which could easily come from a Christian theologian. This indicates that modern anthropology cannot be reduced to a static position. His basic criticism is that Leach has misused the comparative method. There is no real analogy between the Christian belief and the beliefs of Australian Aborigines. The former deals with one extraordinary conception, the latter covers all ordinary conceptions. The former believe in virginal conception, the latter believe in parthenogenesis. The latter propound no biological occurrence, the former proclaim '*the audacious theological truth that the Son of God became incarnate in a very specific manner*'. In fact the only similarity between the two beliefs is that in both instances conception occurs without copulation. Spiro totally rejects the idea that the scholar should not take seriously what the believer says he believes. The gospels mean exactly what they say. He then goes on to analyse the functional value of this belief in the Aboriginal context. Here his remarks are unfortunately quite irrelevant to our discussion.

Of the scholars who responded to the Leach-Spiro debate only two are at all relevant to our subject. J.M.D. Derett, who approaches the subject from a theological point of view, accepts Leach's understanding of the gospels. He believes the evangelists had a two-stage view of Jesus' conception. Firstly Mary experienced a spirit pregnancy which was followed by a human pregnancy. As with Leach, Derett does not take the gospels at face value, and regards the virginal conception as a symbolic way of expressing important religious beliefs. S. Montagne approaches the subject from the aspect of the beliefs of the Trobriand islanders in the Western Pacific. The remarks which she makes which are relevant to our subject are an endorsement of Spiro's criticism of Leach. She criticises Leach for misusing the comparative method and highlighting the minor similarities between Christian beliefs and those of primitive cultures, to the exclusion of the major differences.

Derett's approach is significant because it again shows the link between the theologoumenal approach to the conception and a certain school of modern anthropology. The significance lies in the fact that this school of anthropology has come under severe criticism and has not been able to demonstrate its position satisfactorily. Theologians should learn a valuable lesson from this and re-examine

their 'symbolic' approach to religious truth. The Kantian distinction between facts and meanings has its equivalent in anthropology as well. The overall significance which this anthropological debate has for our present study is to show that modern anthropology has not so far been at all relevant. This irrelevance tends to substantiate the work of Boslooper who found no true analogies to the virginal conception in the study of comparative religions.

Our agreement with Boslooper in his critical study of comparative religions does not mean that we accept his final conclusion. Having demonstrated that there are no real contacts between Christian and non-Christian concepts of virginal conception, Boslooper then proceeds to reject the only logical conclusion of his work by accounting for the origin of the Christian tradition in terms of the Jungian concept of mythical archetypes. He combines Carl Jung's psychological approach with Otto Rank's understanding of myths. Rank describes them in terms of '*very general traits of the human psyche rather than in primary community or migration*', Boslooper op.cit., p 185. Boslooper bases this psychological understanding of the virginal conception upon the work of Goulder and Sanderson. He states that the '*stories of Jesus' nativity are excellent examples of a "Christian Midrashic haggada" on a number of Christian convictions.*'

*The story of the virgin birth represents in mythical form two of Christendom's principal logical propositions, that God acted in history and that monogamous marriage is civilization's most important social institution.*

Boslooper, op.cit., p 235-237. This view raises a number of questions. Firstly we have had reason to reject the work of Goulder and Sanderson. Their approach suffers from a number of fundamental problems. The very basis of Boslooper's understanding of the infancy narrative is questionable. It certainly is a far cry from what Luke seemed to understand he was doing (Lk. 1:1-4). Secondly, Boslooper falls into the theologumenal category of biblical interpretation. All the problems of meaning without historical content must equally arise in his position. Thirdly, the substitution of modern psychology in the place of anthropology or the study of comparative religions is hardly an improvement. Jungian's psychology may be an even less appropriate approach to the infancy narratives than comparative religion. Further, if the assumptions of Jungian's psychology are themselves of relative truth value, they do not constitute a sound basis for interpreting the infancy narratives. Jung's whole system is very similar on many points to Eastern mysticism. Does Boslooper propose that we should interpret scripture from the vantage point of Eastern mysticism? Many Western mystics do this, but does it lead to a correct understanding of the N.T. ? In addition, is it not always a precarious procedure to use a secular philosophy as a principle of interpreting the scriptures, whether that philosophy be nineteenth century Idealism, twentieth century existentialism or Jungian psychology. Fourthly, Boslooper understands the infancy narratives as making their primary contribution in the area of monogamous marriage relationships. This is evident from remarks to this effect throughout his book. But we may wonder whether this is really the main concern of the infancy narratives. The concept of monogamous marriage is never once mentioned in either Matt. I-II or Luke 1 - 11.

216. Brown comments '*That ministry (i.e. John's) has already begun when John the Baptist causes Elizabeth to recognise the Lord in Mary's womb.*' Birth,op.cit., p 345.
217. Brown proposes that '*Luke has woven items of tradition into his own composition, but the dominant story wherein Elizabeth and John the Baptist pay homage to Mary and Jesus is a conception of Lucan theology.*' Birth,op.cit., p 339-340 . True, the present narrative shows Luke's theological interest. That does not warrant the conclusion that the tradition must therefore be non-historical. Brown judges it non-historical because structurally it seems to have been added later. But can we be so sure of the structure which we see in the Lucan narrative? Brown himself indicates how various scholars have proposed rather differing structures for the Lucan infancy narrative (p 248-253). And just because a passage suits Luke's theological purposes need not mean that he created it himself, just as the use of Markan material by Luke to suit his theological interest does not mean that Luke created the tradition. We see here the hand of Luke the redactor. This need not mean that we meet Luke the creator.
- Marshall comments on the theory of Lucan composition; '*this is improbable in view of the style and the Palestinian background.*' Commentary,op.cit., p 77 .
218. Brown's (Birth op.cit.) explanation that Luke combined a stock biblical phrase (e.g. 2 Sam.2.1) with the indication that the parents of Samuel (who typify John's parents) lived in the hill country (1 Sam.1.1), due to his very general knowledge about John's parents, is rather involved and does not really attempt to explain the unusual nature of Luke's text in Greek ( p 332). More weighty is Marshall's rejection of the mis-translation theory on the grounds that this would arise in translating Aramaic and not Hebrew. Commentary op.cit., p 80 .
219. It is '*A Hebraistic periphrasis for the superlative, "Among women thou art the one who is especially blessed".*' Plummer,op.cit., p 29.
220. Plummer, op.cit., p 27.
221. Geldenhuys, op.cit., p 83; Brown, Birth,op.cit., p 333.
222. '*To cry with a loud voice may be a formal mark of inspired utterance.*' Marshall Commentary,op.cit., p 81 .
223. *Εποίησεν κρατος εν βραχιωι αυτου, κρατος* 'is closer to the Hebrew than the Septuagint which usually uses *δυναμις*' ( see p 292, 293f above).
224. In 1.46, *Μεγαλυνει* may reflect the name '*Mary*'. *σωτηρι* in 1.47 may allude to '*Jesus*'. In 1.49 *μεγαλα ο δυνατος* may allude to the name '*Gabriel*'. *ελεος* in 1.50 may reflect a play on the name '*John*'. Again *δυναστας* in 1.52 may refer to '*Gabriel*'. The verse which seems to carry the most allusions is 1.54-55a; *μνησθηναι* could allude to '*Zechariah*', *ελεους* to '*John*', and *ελαλησεν* to '*Elizabeth*'. (see p 296 above).
225. Creed, op.cit., p 21.
226. Browning, op.cit., p 41.
227. Ruddick, op.cit., p 344-345.
228. Harrington, Commentary,op.cit., p 53.

According to Brown, 'one should be cautious in drawing an identification from such echoes of an O.T. scene'. Birth, op.cit., p 344. He feels these O.T. typologies are dubious.

229. Luke does not add this title into the Markan tradition. He merely takes it over from Mark in 19.31 and 19.34. He is careful not to give the impression that the disciples used this title for Jesus before the resurrection. Despite the reserve, this verse may still be regarded as an exception to the rule; Marshall, *Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 166-167.
230. Stephen Benko, *The Magnificat, A History of the Controversy*, p 28-30. Creed, op.cit., p 22-23, and Grundmann, Lukas, op.cit., p 64. Machen, *The Hymns of the First Chapter of Luke*, p 28-30.
231. For the traditional reading there is Sinaiticus A,B,C, the Ferrer group and a great number of Greek manuscripts. For 'Elizabeth' there is Vercellensis, Veronenisis and Rhedigeranus from the old Latin manuscripts (fourth and fifth century) and readings from Irenaeus and Origin, but in the case of both the latter the evidence is ambiguous. Nicota (A.D.414) also supports this reading, The Greek New Testament. J.M. Creed maintains that it is more difficult to explain how 'Mary' could have been changed to 'Elizabeth' than vice versa. However many of the reasons which modern scholars adduce for the reading 'Elizabeth' could also have appealed to an ancient scribe.
232. Brown ends his helpful discussion with the statement 'While it is difficult to be certain, in my judgement, there are better arguments for the "Mary" ascription than for the "Elizabeth" ascription'. Birth, op.cit., p 78.
233. Harnack's method, in dealing with the Lucan infancy narrative, was first to extract the obvious Septuagintisms, and then examine the remainder of the text in order to ascertain how typically Lucan the language was. He found the remaining language to be well endowed with Lucanisms. In ascertaining what was specifically Lucan he compared each word or phrase with its usage in the rest of Luke's writings and in the remainder of the N.T. However, he did not compare the Lucan usage with the Septuagint or contemporary Jewish Hellenistic literature, as for instance the Psalms of Solomon. This was a mistake on his part. Friedrich Spitta, and later Machen, pointed out that Harnack's criteria for typical Septuagintisms had been too restricted. Of the remaining narrative a considerable amount could also be shown to be typically Septuagintal. The number of Lucanisms was therefore considerably reduced. This indicated that the narrative did not necessarily prove to be of Lucan authorship. It could equally be attributed to a writer who was as influenced by the Septuagint as Luke was. However the evidence which remained even after the more restricted test had been made still included enough Lucanisms to prove Lucan editorship at least, except for the Magnificat and Benedictus. Here the more restricted test removed all certain Lucanisms. We may illustrate what we mean by citing a few examples. In Lk.1.6 we have the word *εὐαγγιον*. This occurs twice in Lk. 1-2, twice in Luke, three times in Acts and nowhere else in the N.T. This led Harnack to deduce that it was a Lucanism. He did not notice however that all three passages in Acts come from the speeches of Jewish Christians, which may depend upon an Aramaic tradition or source and that *εὐαγγιον* is so common in the Septuagint that its use in Luke 1-2 was almost inevitable. Machen, *The Origin of the First two chapters of Luke*, p 213.

Such evidence cannot legitimately prove a Lucanism. On the other hand, in Luke 1.9 we find the phrase *κατα το εθος*. This occurs twice in Luke 1-2, once in Luke, seven times in Acts, once in John, is absent from Matthew and Mark, and occurs once in the rest of the N.T. At the same time this word is rare in the Septuagint.

It occurs only six times, and only in the Apocrypha. This means that *κατα το εθος* is most probably a Lucanism. Machen, *The Hymns* 'op.cit.', p 216.

These two examples show how misleading it can be to leave the occurrence of a word in the Septuagint out of one's consideration. This method when used on Luke 1-2 still shows enough evidence to prove the hand of Luke in the final form of the narrative. However it cuts down the evidence which Harnack deduced so that it is no longer possible to prove that Luke was the original author. He may very possibly have relied upon sources. This criticism of Harnack's work is particularly damaging in the case of the Magnificat. Thus for instance *μεγαλυνει* (46), *επιβλεπει επι* (48), *απο του νυν* (48) and *εξαποστελλει* (53), which Harnack took to be specifically Lucan, Spitta demonstrated to be typically Septuagintal. Harnack took *το ελεος* (50) to be Lucan. However, this phrase occurs once in Luke, not at all in Acts, is well attested in Matthew, and occurs frequently in the Septuagint. Further, Machen has shown that *οι φοβουμενοι του Θεου* (50) *εντιμωλημι* (53) and *αντιλαμβανεσθαι* (54) are all typical Septuagintisms. Machen, *The Hymns ...* 'op.cit.' p 4-6. Harnack regarded the Magnificat as one of the clearest cases of Lucan authorship. This conclusion should be reversed. It proves to be one of the weakest cases. In fact, after the more exacting work of Spitta and Machen, none of Harnack's Lucanisms remain in the Magnificat.

234. Benoit, op.cit., p 168-169, 182-191.

235. Marshall accepts the theory of a Hebrew original. Commentary, op.cit., p 79. See also Feliks Gryglewicz, *'Die Herkunft der Hymnen des Kindheitsevangeliium des Lukas'*, p 265-273. Gryglewicz regards all the Lucan hymns as early Jewish Palestinian Christian songs.

236. Winter, *Magnificat and Benedictus*, op.cit.

237. Douglas Jones, *The Background and Character of the Lucan Psalms*, p 19 note 3.

238. Winter, *Magnificat and Benedictus*, op.cit., and Grundmann, Lukas, op.cit., p 63-64.

239. Jones, op.cit., p 19-20.

His findings will be stated in summary form.

1.46-47. Almost every phrase can be found in the Septuagint of the O.T. psalms e.g. Ps 33 (Ps. 34 in the RSV) Ps. 34.9; Ps. 94.1. One element is however not found in the O.T. psalms, namely the parallelism between *ψυχη* and *πνευμα*. This phenomenon is found however in late Jewish psalmography (e.g. wisdom of Sol. 15.11; 16.14; Dan.3.39,86). The use of these psalms is significant. One can rarely say that the Magnificat is following one particular psalm. *'Psalm phrases and echoes are everywhere, but they are elusive even if they are more than allusions'*.

1.48. *οτι επεβλεψεν επι την ταπεινωσω της δουλος αυτου*

All three Lucan psalms celebrate the salvation event through the experience of an individual. (See *παιδον* in 1.76 and *ειδον οι οφθαλμοι μου το σωτηριον σου* in 2.30). Here it is the *δουλη*. The use of *ταπεινωσω* and the similarity of this verse to 1. Sam. 1.11 has led many to believe that the Magnificat is based upon the song of Hannah. This cannot be substantiated. This sentence also occurs in widely diverse parts of the O.T. (e.g. Ps.101.18 LXX). The concept of the poor became particularly popular in late Judaism. It appears frequently in the Testament of the XII Patriarchs.

1.49. *οτι εποησεν μοι μεγαλα ο δυνατος*

The 'great things' which God has done is a frequent O.T. theme. But here the language of 51-54 shows that the salvation event has occurred. The language is eschatological. The time of fulfilment has dawned.

αγιον το ονομα αυτου is frequent in the O.T. (Ps.111.9LXX) but the 'holy name' of God became more frequent in later Judaism. (Wisdom of Sol.10.20.tob.13.18).

1.50. και το ελεος αυτου εις γενεας και γενεας τοις φοβουμενοις αυτου

The exact parallel does not occur in the O.T. but does occur in the Test.of Levi. 18.8. See also Marshall, Commentary,op.cit., p 83. The mercy of God upon those who fear him is a common idea in Psalms of Sol.

1.51. εποιησεν κρτος εν βραχιονι αυτου δεισκορπισεν υπερηφανους διανοια καρδιας αυτων

Here εποιχσεν κρατος and διανοια καρδιας could reflect the Hebrew. There are again many similarities with the O.T. psalms in the Septuagint and other echoes in later Jewish literature (e.g. IGH IV 13).

1.52. καθειλεν δυναστας απο θρονων και υψωσεν ταπεινους

In both this and the preceding verse, the main thought is the overthrowing of God's enemies. This is typical of later Jewish psalmography. The equivalence with 1.Sam.2.7-8 is not exact. Eccles.10.14 is verbally closer.

υψωσεν ταπεινους is a classical term for the Day of the Lord. This theme is found in Tobit.13.2 and IQM 14.10-11.

1.53. πυνωντας ενεπλησεν αγαθων και πλουτουντας εξαπεστειλεν κενους

This verse has many O.T. echoes. However, the contrast between the hungry and the rich was a common element in folk-law which was introduced into Palestine by the Alexandrian Jews. Again therefore the Magnificat may reflect later Judaism.

1.54 αντελαβετο Ισραηλ παιδος αυτου

The words are to be found throughout the O.T. However παις used of Israel only occurs in the Psalms of Solomon 12.7 and 17.21,23. Jones begins to find a pattern developing in the study so far. *'The time is close to a quotation from LXX all the words are there; but it is not identical with any passage and there is a pointer to the literature of the turn of the era' (p 27).*

1.55 The idea of God remembering his mercy, his promise to the fathers and particularly to Abraham, is a characteristic refrain in O.T. and post-exilic Judaism. There the idea was always set in the context of hope. God will one day remember his promise. Here God has remembered his promise to Abraham. The psalmist looks back over the whole history of the waiting people and says God has remembered his promise. This is the language of fulfilment, and indicates that for the psalmist the turning point had already arrived. However it had only just arrived. It is still expressed very much in the language of hope.

240. Jones, op.cit., p 19-47.

Brown comes to the same conclusion, Birth,op.cit., (p 346-350) i.e. that they were pre-Lucan, Jewish Christian hymns, either composed in Hebrew or in Greek. He also gives a helpful table indicating how the Lucan hymns are a mosaic of O.T. quotation, quotations from intertestamental literature and the writings of the Qumran community (p 358-359, 384-389). His position is essentially the same as that of Davis (p 331-365).

241. Robert C. Tannehill, *'The Magnificat as Poem'*.

242. Tannehill, op.cit., p 265 note 9.

243. Brown states his belief that no *'serious scholarship accepts the Lucan setting'*. His reason is that *'it is obviously unlikely that such finished poetry could have been composed on the spot by ordinary people'*. Birth,op.cit., p 346. Despite his rejection of naturalistic presuppositions against the work of the Holy Spirit one must ask why such *finished poetry* must be judged to be impossible. This is precisely the phenomenon which is found in *'charismatic'* or pentecostal churches and groups throughout the world. Such an argument has no force for those who have experienced such phenomena. (Note - at this point the validity or nature of such phenomena are not being discussed. The point is that such *'finished poetry'* is very often given completely spontaneously.) If the early church, and possibly the remnant of Judaism during the time of Christ's birth, or the Zealot community, were an *'enthusiastic movement'* as many scholars affirm, then why could the same phenomena not have occurred there? This is a case where the historiographical principle of analogy can be used positively rather than negatively.
244. It may be of interest to note that J.M.Ford is resident at Notre Dame, where the American Catholic Charismatic Renewal first began. Her experience of current *'prophetic'* phenomena may have assisted her in her perceptive analysis of the Lucan infancy narrative. J. Massyngberde Ford, *'Zealotism and the Lucan Infancy Narratives'* p 280-292.
- If Luke's setting is not the original one and if J.M.Ford's thesis cannot be accepted, then Brown's location of these Psalms amongst the *'poor'* of the early Christian community in Jerusalem must surely be judged to be the most likely thesis presented so far. Birth,op.cit., p 350-355 .
245. Laurentin, op.cit.,  
We quote J.M.Ford as follows,
- The present writer does not think these need be insertions into the narratives, but genuine hymns recited by those who lived subsequently to the Maccabees and were in sympathy with the Zealots, sharing their nationalistic thinking...They are Zealot hymns, not indeed inserted into the narrative, but recited upon the occasion to which they are attributed. 'Zealotism and the Lucan Infancy Narrative', op.cit., p 285 .*
246. Creed, op.cit., p 24.
247. Winter, *'The Cultural Background'*, op.cit., p 238.
248. Ellis, op.cit., p 75 and  
Leon Morris, Luke, op.cit.,p 78.
249. See Marshall, Commentary,op.cit., p 88.
250. Leon Morris concludes: *'There seems no reason for rejecting SB's (Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck's) view that Luke happens to be the first to mention a custom that the Jews had developed.'*  
Leon Morris, Luke,op.cit., p 73.



Marshall similarly sees no problem here, *Commentary, op.cit.*, p 88.

Brown sees no problem. *We are not certain how common it was at this time to have a child named upon circumcision although rabbinic tradition has Moses named on that occasion (Pirke Rabbi Eleazer 48 (27c)). Birth, op.cit.*, p 369.

251. Creed, *op.cit.*, p 24-25, also Songer, *op.cit.*, p 459 note 32.
252. *'There is no need to suppose that an independent revelation had been given to her...it is more likely that Zechariah had communicated the angelic message to her...'* Marshall *Commentary, op.cit.*, 88. We therefore find Brown's comment (*Birth, op.cit.*) rather strange; *'It would be banal to assume that Zechariah had informed her about the angel's command to name the child John (1.13). Zechariah was mute, and the reader is probably meant to think that Elizabeth's decision was a spontaneous and marvellous confirmation of God's plan'* (p 369, 375). The banality depends upon the non-historicity of the entire account, a dogmatic assumption which is just as uncritical as the assumption of historicity. For a similar view to Marshall, see Schneider, *op.cit.*, p 60.
253. Plummer, *op.cit.*, p 36.
254. Creed, *op.cit.*, p 25.
255. κωφος can mean "dumb" (11.14) or "deaf" (7.22) or both (Philo Spec.4 19f.). The third meaning is supported by the fact that Zechariah is regarded as deaf as well as dumb in 1.62. Marshall *Commentary, op.cit.*, p 81.
256. Dibelius, *op.cit.*, p1-80.
257. Plummer, *op.cit.*, p 35, 38. Creed, *op.cit.*, p 25.
258. 1.68. Harnack took *επεσκεψατο* to be a Lucanism. However, it is used frequently in this sense in the Septuagint, in the Psalms of Solomon (3.14) and in Zadokite document 5.16; 7.9; 8.2,3. Its use here in conjunction with *λυτρωσις* and *ανατολη* (78) is entirely new. The conjunction of this idea with the 'horn of salvation' is found in the Zadokite document 1.5-12. Machen, *The Hymns...* *op.cit.*, p 8.

*Ευλογητος κυριως ο Θεος του Ισραηλ* is never found to introduce a psalm in the O.T., but this opening formula is found in IQM 14.4, Jones *op.cit.*, p 29. Otherwise the language of this verse is thoroughly Old Testamental and Septuagintal.

1.69

René Laurentin finds etymological allusions to both Mary (*ηγειρεν*) and Jesus (*σωτηριας*) in this verse. This is similar to the twofold allusion to these names in 1.46-47 (see p 296 above). Harnack suggested that the use of *εγειρω* was Luke's way of alluding to the resurrection. This cannot be substantiated. A similar phrase appears in Jud.3.9 in the Septuagint. *σωτηριας* is often taken to be a typical Lucanism. The usage does not really support this. It occurs seven times in Luke-Acts besides Luke 1-11 while it occurs nineteen times in Paul and is very frequent in the Septuagint. It also occurs in the Ps. of Sol. 10.9; 12.7, Machen, *The Hymns....*, *op.cit.*, p 8. However the use of other cognates does seem to indicate a Lucan theological concern. Marshall, *Luke, Historian, op.cit.*, p 92-94. Perhaps Machen has rather overdone his restriction of Lucanisms in this case. *κερας* for the Messiah is very well attested in the Septuagint in 2 Sam. 22.3 where the term is not Messianic. This is the first case where the phrase is used in a distinctly Messianic sense, Jones *op.cit.*, p 30. The *οικω Δαυιδ* is of course strongly Messianic. The aorist of *ηγειρεν* and the remainder of 68-75 may reflect the Hebrew prophetic perfect, but it is more natural to take the meaning here as referring to something which is already accomplished. The whole tenor of the psalm shows that the time of fulfilment has already dawned.

## 1.70

καθως ελαλησεν δια στοματος των αγιων απ αιωνος προφητων αυτου is almost identical to Acts 3.21. This is one of the stronger arguments in favour of Lucan authorship or redaction. The case is somewhat weakened however by the omission of απ αιωνος from Acts 3.21 in some manuscripts and the fact that the verse appears in one of the Petrine speeches which may reflect an earlier Palestinian tradition. Acts 3.21 could also depend upon Luke 1.70. The similarity may not indicate a common Lucan authorship, though a good possibility remains: Machen, *The Hymns.....*, op.cit., p 9-12; Jones, op.cit., p 31 note 4 and Brown *Birth*, op.cit., p 371; Schneider, op.cit., p 61.

Marshall does not entirely accept the idea of a Lucan insertion. For his reasons see *Commentary*, op.cit., p 91. The expression αγιων προφητων does not occur in the O.T. but is found in Wisd. of Sol. 11.1 and 2 Bar. 85. The O.T. prophetic hope is definitely looked back on, as though from the time when all those hopes have found their fulfilment. *'No-one in Old Testament times speaks of prophecy quite as this psalmist does,'* Jones op.cit., p 30-31.

## 1.71.

σωτηριαν is adduced by Laurentin as a play on 'Jesus' in Hebrew. Harnack took χειρος to be a Lucanism. However the only other exact occurrence is one case in Acts 12.11 and a similar construction occurs six times in Johannine literature (Jn. and Rev.). The occurrence in Acts is again in one of Peter's speeches, and it is also found in the Septuagint in Ps. 106.10. Machen, *The Hymns...* op.cit., p 13. The thought of salvation from enemies does not appear in a typically political sense, as in Judaism, but neither is it specifically Christian. The deliverance from political bondage is only just being transformed into salvation from sin (vs. 77). This speaks of the period before the O.T. hope had been utterly transcended but after the fulfilment of that hope had already begun.

## 1.72-74.

It is here that Laurentin probably has his strongest case for etymological allusions in the Hebrew text. ελεος could refer to 'John', μνησθηναι to 'Zechariah', and ωμοσεν to 'Elizabeth'. Thus three lines following each other (72a, 72b, 73) are structured around the names of three of the principal figures. This occurs just prior to the sudden και συ δε in vs. 76 (see p 296 above). Harnack took ποιησαι ελεος μετα to be Lucan, but it is common in the Septuagint. Brown actually feels it reflects a Hebrew construction, *Birth*, op.cit., p 372. See also, Marshall, *Commentary*, op.cit., p 92. Ορκου ον ωμοσεν is also Septuagintal. Δουναι with the infinitive is Septuagintal. Του with the infinitive is very common in the Septuagint, though admittedly frequent in Luke-Acts in the N.T. λατρευειν occurs eight times in Luke-Acts but thirteen times in the remainder of the N.T. and is rather common in the Septuagint. It cannot be taken as a Lucanism. None of Harnack's Lucanisms have a very strong probability in these verses, Machen, *The Hymns...* op.cit., p 13-14. Διαθηκης αγιος only occurs in later Jewish literature. The oath which he swore to our father Abraham' is typical of the O.T. Jones finds a possible reliance on the Hebrew in vs. 73. op.cit., p 31-32. Again the deliverance from enemies looks back to the Jewish nationalist hope. λατρευειν introduces the sacerdotal element to Zechariah and together with the following verse (vs 75) locates the psalm in a priestly environment. *'As distinct from the more general doulein this verb latreuein in the LXX and N.T. most often carries the tone of religious or cultic service'*. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 372. At this point it is interesting to notice the connection which Alfred Edersheim found between the Benedictus and the eighteen Benedictions which were regularly recited by the temple priests. He summarises their chief content as follows;

*God as the Shield of Abraham, He that raises the dead, and causes salvation to shoot forth, the Holy One; Who graciously giveth knowledge: Who taketh pleasure in repentance: Who multiplieth forgiveness: Who redeemeth Israel: Who healeth their diseases: Who Blesseth the years: Who gathereth the outcasts of His people: Who loveth righteousness and judgment: Who is the abode and stay of the righteous: Who buildeth Jerusalem: Who causeth the Horn of Salvation to shoot forth: Who heareth prayer: Who bringeth back His Shekinah to Zion: God the Gracious One, to whom praise is due: Who blesseth His people Israel with peace.* Edersheim, op.cit., p 76.

The words in emphasis indicate the points of correspondence which Edersheim suggested. We may add 'raises the dead' as a link with *ἡγείρεν* (vs.69).

### 1.75

Harnack took *ἐνώπιον* to be a Lucanism. It is very common in the Lucan writings (36 times) and does not occur in Matthew, Mark or John. However it occurs 32 times in Revelation and is very common in the Septuagint. Any Jewish Christian writer could have employed it, Machen, *'The Hymns...'* op.cit., p 15. The language of this verse is typically Septuagintal. The idea of salvation bringing a freedom for God's people to serve him is not found in the O.T. It is found in IQH 17.14 and 2.35-36. The second half of the Benedictus has caused much debate. Unfortunately the debate from two sides just about cancels itself out, so that no position can be taken as finally demonstrated. Thus for instance Vielhauer thought he could prove that it belonged to a Baptist sect (see p 26-29 above). Winter tried to show that it was a Jewish song and Benoit tried to show that vs.76-77 were interpolated by Luke to be applied to John. Jones argues for the unity of the poem on the grounds that Hebrew poetry was very flexible (the change in metre at vs.76 in Hebrew translation need not be significant) and that both the contents and the style of the poem indicate its unity, Jones, op.cit., p 33-34. On unity see also David Daube, op.cit., p 200-201. The burden of proof remains on those who wish to deny the unity of the poem. After examining the various theories Marshall concludes *'While the hymn reflects two kinds of Jewish verse, the argument for separating the two parts from one another are not convincing.'* Commentary op.cit., p 86-87. Grundmann points out that it is unlikely that a Christian song would ever be applied to a non-Christian setting, Lukas, op.cit., p 69-70.

### 1.76

*ὑψίστου*. Harnack took this to be a Lucanism. However it is found in Mark and in Hebrews, and was very common in the Septuagint. Προπορευση cannot be regarded as a Lucanism. The only other occurrence in Lucan writings is Ac.7.40 where it is a quotation of the Septuagint, Machen, *'The Hymns...'* op.cit., p 16. Προφητης υψίστου is not found in the O.T., but is attested in Test.Levi.8.15, Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 93. The idea of preparing the way for the Lord is taken from Mal.3.1 and Isa.40.3. The idea was commonly used in a slightly different sense at Qumran. Jones, op.cit., p 34-36, and Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 372-373. As verses 76-77 stand in the Lucan context there can be no doubt that they were meant to refer to John.

Γνωσις, taken by Harnack to be a Lucanism, is frequent in Paul and in the Septuagint, Machen, *The Hymns...* op.cit., p 16. Ἀφεσει αμαρτιων is possibly the only clear Lucanism in this psalm. Benoit's linking of this phrase with the kerygmatic terminology in Acts cannot really be denied, Benoit, op.cit., p 188-190. Brown notes clear parallels at Qumran, but also reminds us of how typically Lucan it is. Birth, op.cit. p 373. He takes various verses with Lucan content to be Lucan additions to the original hymn (p 381-391). This is quite possible. However it is just as possible to see these Lucanisms as a mark of Lucan editorship, i.e. his manner of translating and reconstructing the material he received. One cannot demonstrate that the Lucan material in the Benedictus actually originated with Luke. Marshall also notes the parallel with Acts 4.10-12 at this point. Commentary, op.cit., p 93. This would indicate Lucan redaction. The phrase γνωσις σωτηριας is unique to this psalm. This shows that the psalm must be 'Christian' or at least reflect the time of the new age rather than the time of expectation, Jones, op.cit., p 36-37.

## 1.78.

Jones finds that the construction of this verse indicates a Hebrew original. Brown also notes this (Birth, op.cit., p 94) as does Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 94. The use of σπλαγγνα is attested in later Jewish literature (i.e. Testament of XII Patriarchs, Test. Levi and at Qumran. Jones, op.cit., p 37-38. Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 373. There is much debate over the meaning of ανατολη εξ υψους. Some commentators regard it as a reference to the 'branch' (i.e. the Messiah - Jer.23.5; Zech 3.8; 6.12), Jones, op.cit., p 39, but the majority see it as a Messianic title used for the 'rising' of the Messiah (Mal.3.20; Isa.60.1), Harrington Commentary, op.cit., p 58-59; Ellis, Luke, op.cit., p 77; Browning, op.cit., p 43; Creed, op.cit., p 27.; Plummer, op.cit., p 43; Manson, op.cit., p 15; Morris Luke, op.cit., p 811, while some see the possibility of finding both ideas in the same term, Geldenhuys, op.cit., p 97; Jones, op.cit., p 38-39. The context of light in the darkness certainly demands a reference to the 'light' of the Messiah. The use of both ideas is not impossible. See also Brown, op.cit., p 347,390, note 40 and Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 95. Jones shows how the technical Messianic name 'branch' moved towards the meaning of 'rising' in later Jewish literature. The use of this terminology of arising light places this psalm in the era of fulfilment. The sun had not yet come to its zenith, but it had certainly risen.

## 1.79

Both επιφαναι and οδον ειρηνης which were used in Harnack's arguments are not specifically Lucan, Machen, *The Hymns...* op.cit., p 17. While the imagery of light and darkness is common in Isaiah it was very common at Qumran, Jones, op.cit., p 39-40.

- 259. See Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 377-378 and especially note 8 and 11. The priestly origin is also supported by Gryglewicz, op.cit., p 272-273.
- 260. Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 379 note 14.
- 261. Geldenhuys, op.cit., p 29-30. Nigel Turner, quoted in Ogg, *The Quirinius question today*, p 233; Barnett, 'απογραφη and απογραφεσθαι in Luke 2.1-5', p 379 note 13.
- 262. Ramsay, op.cit., p 95-111.

## THE CENSUS

The two most authoritative studies of the subject in recent research come to the following conclusions. On the one hand Brown, who includes a brief appendix on the subject, (Birth, op.cit., p 547-555) comments as follows,

*When all is evaluated, the weight of the evidence is strongly against the possibility of reconciling the evidence in Luke 1 and Luke 2. There is no serious reason to believe that there was a Roman census of Palestine under Quirinius during the reign of Herod the Great (p 554).*

On the other hand David J. Hayles, who approaches the subject as a classical scholar, ends his study with this statement;

*For years the passage under consideration has come under heavy fire. Luke's reputation has been seriously buffeted; at times due to prevailing scepticism it has been close to collapsing. The material presented in these articles makes no pretence of having eliminated all the difficulties, nor is it claimed that watertight arguments have been established in Luke's defence. If they have not always enjoyed a full measure of success in confirming Luke's statement, at least the shallowness of many hypotheses previously advanced has been shown...It remains the contention of the writer, that nothing adverse to Luke has been sufficiently convincing to lower his historical stature. David J. Hayles, 'The Roman Census and Jesus' Birth, Was Luke Correct?' p 30.*

Unfortunately Brown does not seem to have been aware of Hayles' work on the subject. In our present study we cannot hope to go into the detail of a scholar such as Hayles. A few crucial points will be mentioned in connection with the work of Brown, Hayles and other scholars who have recently discussed the issue.

1. Firstly, it is significant that basically two kinds of scholars grapple with the issue: classical and N.T. scholars. In a previous period it was the classical scholar, William Ramsay, who felt that Luke's accuracy should be defended. At the present time the strongest support for Luke's account has again come from a classical scholar. (Hayles is a young Australian scholar, who originally submitted his work as a research thesis. It was abbreviated and printed in *Buried History* 1973-1974.) This may indicate that N.T. scholars are often unreasonably sceptical. Thus for instance Brown comments that with only the non-Biblical evidence, no one would have ever thought of an earlier census in Syria (p 554). This statement gives the impression that Luke's writings are not worthy of serious consideration as historical evidence. Hayles protests at this kind of attitude, '*Luke's testimony apparently falls into some category other than historical evidence!*'

2. As Hayles points out in his survey of the discussion (p 113-115), the pendulum of scholarly opinion has often swung from one extreme to the other. The present discussion has come no nearer to resolving the issue. In the final analysis historical criticism must wait for further evidence. Strong statements either in favour of or against Lucan accuracy are precarious at this stage of our knowledge.

3. In discussing the kata oikian census system in Egypt, Brown dismisses the possibility of using the evidence of the Matthean infancy narrative in favour of some permanent interest of Joseph in Nazareth (p 549). But if the difficulties of reconciling the two narratives are not as serious as Brown presumes them to be then this argument loses its force (see on Luke 2.39 p 152-153 above). As Hayles points out the real addition of Luke to what is known from Egypt is not that Joseph had to return to Bethlehem (that could easily have been demanded by the Roman authorities) but that he had to return *'because he was of the house and lineage of David'* (Luke 2:4, Hayles p 126). Here we must assume that the authorities (whether Roman alone or Roman and Herodian together) made use of the existing Jewish customs in order to facilitate the administration of the census. There is still nothing unlikely in this assumption. Marshall does not find any difficulty in presuming that Joseph must have had some property in Bethlehem and gives various reasons for accepting the necessity of returning to their home (Marshall, Commentary op.cit., p 101 and 105 on property). The fact that Augustus did inaugurate some sort of census system for the entire empire remains a strong probability, Marshall Commentary, op.cit., p 100-101.

4. Brown dismisses the ascription of the Tiburtine inscription to Quirinius as *'pure guess'* (p 551). This verdict seems a little extreme. Hayles points out that the alternatives presented by various scholars reveal such a range of opinions that no alternative hypothesis can be taken as definitely superior to the Quirinius hypothesis (p 22). The real problem is that the meaning of the inscription is doubtful. It is therefore inadvisable to use the inscription in the discussion of the Lucan narratives, Marshall Commentary, op.cit., p 103. Brown also goes too far when he argues that Syria was too distant from the Taurus mountains to be used as a base in the Homonadensian war. He seems to forget that one of Ramsay's arguments was the fact that Roman forces had been removed from Asia Minor during B.C. 12-9 in order to deal with uprisings in Thrace and that consequently the only legionary troops in the East at that time were those under the command of the governor of Syria (Hayles p 21-22). Following this line of argument E. Stauffer has proposed that Quirinius was a *'Generalissimo of the East from 12 B.C. onwards much as Pompey, Mark Antony and M. Vipsanius Agrippa had been given special commands.'* Marshall takes this as the best solution attempted so far, though he warns that *'this theory remains speculative'*. Marshall Commentary, op.cit., p 103-104.

5. The possibility of the Roman authorities imposing a census or tax in the realm of Herod is rejected by Brown on the grounds that all other evidence of the Roman authorities making such impositions on vassal states refers to states which were more directly under Roman control. (p 552 and note 15). However he seems to have overlooked the fact that when Herod's domain was divided between his sons, and before Palestine became a Roman province, Augustus could stipulate that the taxes of the Samaritans were to be reduced by one fourth because they had not been involved in the revolt against Varus. Hayles p 26, also Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 101.

6. Brown uses the regular argument from Josephus's silence in regard to an earlier census (p 552). But Hayles shows decisively that this argument is totally unconvincing (p 27-28).

7. Brown thinks that Luke is inaccurate about the uprising of Theudus '*which did not occur till some ten years after Gamaliel's speech*' (p 554-555). But there is no need to identify the Theudus of Acts 5:36 with the Theudus mentioned by Josephus. F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p 124 note 47.

264. Harrington, *Commentary op.cit.*, p 60-61.  
So too, Marshall, '*No solution is free from difficulty, and the problem can hardly be solved without the discovery of fresh evidence*', *Commentary op.cit.*, p 104.

265. J. Duncan M. Derrett, '*Further Light on the Narratives of the Nativity*', p 82-87.

266. Scarcely less dubious is the suggestion made by Brown that Luke may have been induced to create this elaborate form of introduction to the story of Jesus' birth because he wanted to show how it fulfilled Ps. 87:6, Birth, *op.cit.*, p 417-418. This is to associate a thoroughly '*theological*' rather than an '*historical*' interest with Luke which is not really substantiated by the tenor of the Lucan writings. See Marshall, Luke, *Historian*, *op.cit.*

267. 2.4

Ἀνεβη δε και Ιωσηφ απο της Γαλιλαιας εκ πολεως. This sentence '*echoes literally*' the Hebrew text of Micah 4.10 ( see p 293f above).

2.8

αγραυλουντες. This word is not found in the Septuagint but perfectly conveys the meaning of the Hebrew term ( see p 293f above).

2.11

σημερον. According to Winter this was a Hebrew cultic formula used to commemorate an event in the past ( see page 293 f above) Χριστος κυριος, this has always presented a problem to translators. Should it be taken as '*Christ and Lord*', thus referring to the divinity of Christ ( Laurentin takes this view) or should χριστος be taken as an adjective to mean '*anointed Lord*'. For many, e.g. Torrey, *op.cit.*, p 153-154, the solution is to see this as a mistranslation of the Aramaic '*the Lord's Christ*'. There seems to be no decisive argument in favour of any of these interpretations, though perhaps Laurentin's view fits best with Luke's theology in general. The Aramaic original remains a possibility.

2.13

πληθος στρατιας ουρανιου. This does not occur as a translation of the Hebrew term in the Septuagint. This phrase '*undoubtedly*' reflects the Hebrew (See p 293f above).

2.14

Brown examines this verse in detail and shows how the present construction may reflect a Hebraic original, Birth, *op.cit.*, p 404-405. He is followed by Marshall, ευδοκια meaning '*will, good pleasure*', corresponds to a Hebrew or Aramaic construction. This guess made by earlier scholars '*has now been raised to virtual certainty by the attestation of such phrases at Qumran ( IQH 4.32f; 11.9; 4 Q Aram. Apoc ... )*'. The phraseology demonstrates decisively that a Semitic original must be postulated for the couplet', *Commentary, op.cit.*, p 112.

*ρημα*, in the sense of 'thing' is Hebraic, Creed, *op.cit.*, p 36.

- 268. Ben F.Meyer, *'But Mary kept all these things...'* p 42, Creed, *op.cit.*, p 35,36.
- 269. Brown associates this section with what he terms the '*standard annunciation pattern*', Birth, *op.cit.*, p 424.
- 270. Laurentin, *Structure*, *op.cit.*, p 86-88, Machen, *'The Origin...'*, *op.cit.*, p 246-249.
- 271. Brown does explore the other midrashic theories but does not go very far in this direction, Birth, *op.cit.*, p 418-420. His real emphasis falls on the Lucan use of midrashic interpretations of Mic.4-5, p 420-424 .
- 272. According to M.Baily, *'The shepherds and the sign of a child in a manger'*, p 1-4, the usual interpretation introduces a trivial note into a very solemn situation. The mere finding of the child cannot be regarded as the sign. The shepherds had already a convincing enough experience, they needed no confirmation to their faith. And if they did, the circumstances in which the child was found, would not have helped their faith. If anything, it would have hindered them. The O.T. had two kinds of signs, the marvel sign ( where the fulfilment acted as a miraculous confirmation), and the revelatory or meaningful sign, where the meaning of the event was explained by the sign and even brought to pass through the sign. In the case of the latter, symbolic, prophetic action was often the cause of an event coming to pass. When Ahijah rent his garment, the kingdom was in fact divided. In the case of Eli ( I Sam.2.31-34) the sign was the realization of what the prophet announced.

Charles H. Giblin gives further examples of this second use of *σημειον*. In the case of Hezekiah ( Isa.37.30; 2 Kings 19.29) the sign given by the prophet revealed the true meaning of the purpose of God in its fulfilment. The sign of Saul being King of Israel was given in a number of significant events ( I Sam.10.1-7). Again in the case of Hezekiah the movement on the sundial may be interpreted as giving him;

*an indication that his being cured entails redressing his father's cultic misdeeds...Thus frequent use of the term semeion in Biblical texts provides some solid grounds for seeing in Luke's text more than a simple attestation of the angel's veracity. The sign is intrinsically proportioned to the message which precedes it and may be expected to exemplify or develop that message, thus contributing to the understanding and realization of the message. Giblin, 'Reflections on the sign of the manger', p 95.*

- 273. They evoke the story of David's childhood where he was taken from amongst the sheep to become the shepherd of Israel ( 2 Sam. 7.8). Abraham and Israel were shepherds. God was often spoken of as the shepherd of Israel ( Ps.23.1; 28.8; 78.52; Isa.40.11; Jer.31.10). The story of the shepherds is used by Luke in true midrashic style to evoke all the Messianic connotations of Christ's Davidic descent.
- 274. Both Giblin and Meyer believe that Luke is alluding to Isa.1.3-4. However, while the latter takes this allusion to be a note of rejection, the former understands the idea of the manger as a reference to the fact that God is the sustainer and feeder of Israel. Derrett draws attention to the Genesis Rabbah on Gen. 3.18, where



Adam is said to fear that he will be tied to a manger, will have to eat with his back bent, and that he will be confused with the animals. Here Jesus, as the second Adam, also enters into the experience of the manger. The manger was probably a cleft dug out of the rock. Derrett suggests that in Rabbinic thought, a rock was taken to have ritual purity, hence Jesus is born in a place of ritual purity. The manger was also a place of feeding where animals used to 'stuff themselves'. Further, in pagan death-feasts, which the Jews also frequented, the people would sit in the niches in the rocks of the tombs. This leads Derrett to suggest that the shepherds are pictured as going to partake of, or feed upon the child who is God's food to the people. The rock was however also the place where another Mary took Jesus out of the tomb ( Jn.20.1-2). The idea of the death-feast therefore includes the idea of re-birth. He also finds some significance in the story of the birth of Moses, where he believes Moses must have been wrapped in swaddling cloths and 'watched over', by Jochebed, just as Mary watched over Jesus. Two of Derrett's statements are worth quoting,

*Few readers of Luke 2.7,12,16 would guess that the thrice repeated reference to the manger in which Jesus was laid, conceals references to the fall of Adam, the birth of Moses, and the essential and perpetual purity of the Holy Spirit...No unprejudiced reader of the verses cited above can fail to notice that St. Luke wishes the manger to be prominent, though he does not tell us why. His original readers will have recognised, with a squirm of delight, what he was doing. Derrett, *The Manger. Ritual Law and Soteriology*, p 566-567.*

275. *The midrashic features, associated with the word ( i.e. φάτρην ) by J.D.M.Derrett appear to be the product of a lively imagination and it is hard to believe that they would have occurred to Luke or his readers. Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 106-107.*
276. Plummer, op.cit., p 56.
277. Roger Mercurio, 'The shepherds at the crib - a Lucan vignette', p 141-145. He makes the point very well.
278. Marshall examines the various theological and midrashic theories about the shepherds and concludes that Luke's mention of them is more likely to speak for the historicity of the narrative than anything else, Commentary, op.cit., p 107-108. For a similar rejection of the shepherd typologies see Schneider, op.cit., p 65-66.
279. It is gratifying to notice at this point that Brown does not give too much weight to these theories. He is particularly cautious about Derrett's hypothesis, Birth, op.cit., p 418-420, note 36. Marshall comments on the midrashic theory: 'But this explanation is unsatisfactory, since there is no hint of these associations in the Jewish material', Commentary op.cit., p 107 .

280.

*Mich. 5, 1-5*

1. Et toi *Bethlehem* (1) Ephrata,  
la moindre des clans de *Juda*
2. jusqu'au *temps* où celle  
qui doit *enfanter* aura  
*enfanté* (2).
3. Il *paîtra* (son troupeau) dans  
la force de Yahwey (3)  
dans la *gloire* du nom  
du *Seigneur*
4. Lui-même il sera la *Paix*...

*Mich. 4*

Le Seigneur (heb. Yahweh.  
*κύριος* LXX) régnera sur la  
montagne de Sion...à jamais

8. Et toi tour du Troupeau  
Ophel de la Fille de Sion  
à toi va revenir...  
la *Royauté* sur las maison d'Israël
9. ...La douleur t'a saisie comme  
une femme qui enfante
10. Tords-toi de douleur et crie,  
Fille de Sion  
Comme la femme qui enfante  
car maintenant tu sortiras de la  
ville  
et habiteras dans les champs  
C'est là que tu seras délivrée  
C'est là que Yahweh te  
rachètera

*Luc. 2, 4-9, 14*

5. Il monta...en *Judée*, à la  
ville de David nommée *Bethlehem*.
6. Les *jours* de son *enfantement*  
furent accomplis et elle  
*enfanta*...
8. Et des *pasteurs* étaient  
dans la compagnie...
9. La *gloire* du *Seigneur*  
les environna...
14. *Paix* sur la terre...

*Luc*

Cf. 2, 11

Cf. 2, 8 (2).

Cf. 2, 4 et 11 (3).

Cf. *Luc* 2, 4: il monta de la  
ville (4).Cf. *Luc* 2, 8 *αγραιοι* (5)

Cf. 2, 11: Sauveur.

Laurentin, *Structure*, op.cit., p 86-87. Also quoted in Baily, op.cit., p 9-10.

281. That is, those who doubt the historicity of this narrative in more recent research. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the reasons for rejecting the historicity of the narrative tended to involve the miraculous nature of the event which purportedly took place. The latter reason cannot be permitted to weigh heavily in the discussion. We refer again to the previous chapter. The question is not the miraculous events which are recorded but the way in which events are reported. Does the narrator dramatise the situation? Does he give way to imaginative writing? If such dramatisation cannot be found in the Lucan narrative then the objection against the miraculous cannot be substantiated. In this particular pericope the comparison with the apocryphal Gospels is most applicable. The details of such literature have already been given in the treatment of Boslooper's work (p 31-33 above). The vast difference between these stories and this pericope are self-evident, despite D.F. Strauss's attempt to place them in the same category. Any rejection of this pericope on the grounds of its 'mythical' characteristics must explain satisfactorily why there is no description of a conversation between the shepherds and the angels, why the shepherds are not purported to have sung psalms or uttered prophecies, why the hymns which the angels sang are not recorded in more detail, why the conversation between the shepherds and the parents of the child is not recorded. Such elements would surely have been too much for a 'story teller' to resist. Those who seek to find parallels in pagan mythological literature must first explain the content of the apocryphal gospels in their relation to this part of Luke.

A further difficulty which confronts any legendary explanation of this narrative is the vast difference between the current expectation of Jewish Messianism and the content of this narrative, if not the total contradiction of such beliefs by the content of this narrative. We refer to statements made by Edersheim, *op.cit.*, p 87, 666, note 1. It is not enough to show, after the event, that certain parallels can be found with Jewish folk-lore. If this narrative is actually the product of such folk-lore then an explanation must be given which can show how such folk-tales and popular Messianic expectations could have actually led to such a narrative.

But this cannot be done. Had the popular expectation been used to create a story the result would have been much more like the apocryphal gospels than the text of Luke 2.1-20. The narrative cannot therefore be rejected on the grounds of its miraculous content.

282. E. Burrows, *The Gospel of the Infancy*, quoted in Meyer, '*But Mary kept all these things*' *op.cit.*, p48.
283. Quoted in Meyer, '*But Mary Kept all These Things*' *op.cit.*, p31 note 1.
284. In spite of Meyer's work, Brown still sees some significance in the apocalyptic terminology, *Birth*, *op.cit.*, p 430-431.
285. Meyer, '*But Mary Kept all These Things*' *op.cit.*, p48-49.
286. Brown also makes this point, *Birth*, *op.cit.*, p428-429. Also Marshall, '*It is possible that the narrator intended to separate Mary from the wonders in v18 ...*', *Commentary*, *op.cit.*, p113.
287. Machen, '*The Origin ...*' *op.cit.*, p 248.
288. Marshall notes two interpretations of Mary's reaction. Older commentators took this to refer to Mary as the source, while Schürmann holds that the purpose of these verses is to show that the promises made here would be fulfilled in the fu-

ture. He concludes, *'Neither interpretation excludes the other'*. Commentary, op.cit., p 114. Laurentin views Mary as the ultimate source, through the Johannine *'milieu'*, Structure, op.cit., p 19-20.

289. The παρακλησιον του Ισραηλ (v25) was a common phrase amongst the Rabbis to refer to the fulfilment of the Messianic hope. Creed, op.cit., p40; Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p87; Ellis, Luke, op.cit., p -82. Winter believes δεσποτα (vs.29), an unusual word for Luke, reflects a Hebrew original ( see p 293f above). He is followed by Brown, Birth, op.cit., p439.
- 2.29 The indicative απολυεις has been taken by Matthew Black to suggest an underlying Aramaic participle, Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 439.
- 2.32 The use of the nouns αποκαλυψιν and δοξαν without articles is a *'mark of the strong Semitic colouring of the Lucan canticles'* Brown, Birth, op.cit., p440.
- 2.34 This follows the Hebrew of Isa 8.14 rather more closely than the Septuagint of Isa 8.14 ( Winter, see p 293f above).  
Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p122.
- 2.37 νυκτα και ημερον. A Greek would not express himself like this. This is typical of Hebrew thought ( Winter, p 293f above).
290. The circumcision of Jesus is not emphasised. There is no theological significance placed on the event. The name receives prominence. Creed, op.cit., p38.  
The naming of the child in conjunction with circumcision has been discussed in relation to John's birth (see p 141-142 above).
291. Edershiem, op.cit., p 92 and note 6 page 669.
292. Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p115 and further.  
Two ceremonies were required by the law:
- a) The purification of the mother, Lev.12:1-8. This had to take place at the temple and involved a sacrifice, which in the case of the poor could be two turtledoves or two young pigeons (v8).
  - b) The consecration of the first born, Ex. 13:2, 22:28f; 34:19f; Num. 11-13, 40-51; 8:16-18, 18: 15-18. This involved both the dedication of the first-born to the Lord and the payment of the redemption. Luke has assimilated the two as follows:  
Luke 2.22 *'And when the time came...up to Jerusalem'* and 2.24 refer to (a). Luke 2.22 *'to present him to the Lord'* and 2.23 refer to (b).
- Three possible solutions can be given for this assimilation:
- 1) That Jewish practices in the first century had combined the two ceremonies. Luke's assimilation therefore reflects the cultural (not O.T.) situation. This remains a distinct possibility. (Edersheim, op.cit., p 91-92).
  - 2) Luke received in the tradition an account of the two ceremonies being fulfilled and narrated what happened rather loosely. Hence the assimilation. This view tends to be supported by the rather loose connection between the different statements: καθως (v.23), και (v.24). In other words, Luke was not concerned to neatly distinguish the various ceremonies and threw them together rather loosely in a single sentence. Under this view he may also not have been well versed in Jewish Law.
  - 3) Luke had no tradition at his disposal and created a story with a rather confused use of various texts.

Of these explanations, the third is in our view least likely because if Luke

had created the story he would have been more conscious of the use of the O.T. and would not have been likely to confuse two different rituals. We therefore reject Brown's belief that Luke has imaginatively created the story, Birth, op.cit., p448. Brown would '*eschew the elaborate attempts of scholars to save Lucan accuracy*'. This is not really the point. The third explanation is simply not as likely as the first two. The second view is basically the one adopted by Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 115-117. If Edersheim's explanation is to be rejected then this is the only viable alternative. Edersheim's view has so far no evidence to refute it.

293. This is the view taken by Brown who examines the various textual variants. Birth, op.cit., p 436.
294. Plummer, op.cit., p65.  
Brown comments, '*Moreover, if the birth were conceived as miraculous no purification should have been needed.*' Birth, op.cit., p437.
295. Harrington, Commentary, op.cit., p66.
296. Browning, op.cit., p 46.  
Brown supports the view that Luke had Mal. 3:1-2 in mind. Less plausible is Brown's belief that Luke has Daniel's '*anointing of the Holy One*' in mind. (Dan. 9:21-24). Brown finds the idea of the chronological use of the 70 weeks in the infancy narrative '*fantastic*'. If that is fantastic, surely the use of the anointing of the Holy One is at least implausible. There is no real evidence for this in the Lucan narratives, Birth, op.cit., note 6.
297. So also Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 440, who also rejects the thesis that Luke 1 and 2 reflect two clearly distinguishable sources (i.e. as in Bultmann) p445. He similarly rejects the criticism that the use of '*father*' conflicts with the knowledge of the virgin birth (p453, note 25). So also Marshall, who notes that wonder is a typical reaction in all miracle stories, Commentary, op.cit., p115 and p121.
298. Godet, op.cit., p 154-156.  
Plummer, op.cit., p 64, Geldenhyus, op.cit., p121-122.  
Morris, Luke, op.cit., p 90.
299. We cannot agree with Brown when he says that methodologically one cannot use the evidence of the Matthean infancy narrative, Birth, op.cit., p549, note 5. It is going too far to say that, '*Luke 2:7 and Matt 2:11 represent one of the conflicts between the two infancy narratives*'. The only conflict is between 2:39 and the Matthean infancy narrative. If Luke's conflation of a longer time schedule into a simple sentence is allowed then there need be no conflict between Luke 2:4-7 and Matt 2:11. As scholars have pointed out for some time, the visit of the Magi need not be seen as taking place immediately after the birth. If the visit to the temple and the return to Bethlehem had intervened, and if Joseph and Mary had begun to settle down in Bethlehem, then one can readily understand the Matthean use of both *παιδιων* (rather than *βρεφος* - Luke 2:12) and *ουκιαν* (rather than *πατην* and *καταλυματι* Luke 2:7). One can reject such reasoning on the grounds that it is '*ingenious*'. But it is just as easy to reply that a refusal to face such possibilities indicates unreasonable historical scepticism. Notice Marshall's rather brief comment, '*Luke says nothing about the visit to Egypt, which according to Matt 2:13 preceded the settlement in Nazareth*', Commentary, op.cit., p125.
300. Creed, op.cit., p39; Geldenhuys, op.cit., p123; Morris, Luke, op.cit., p87.
301. Allan Cutler, '*Does the Simeon of Luke 2 refer to Simeon the son of Hillel?*', p 29-35.

He gives eleven striking correspondences between the two individuals, as they are

known to us from historical tradition. The name Simeon, without a surname, was not very common during the time of the late Second Temple. The Simeon described by Luke and Rabbinical tradition was such a 'Simeon', without need of qualification. Luke calls him 'a man in Jerusalem' (vs.25). Hillel's son was also a resident of Jerusalem. Further, Luke's incident must have taken place in the court of women. Jewish tradition indicates that the son of Hillel presided over one of the lesser Sanhedrins at this time which met at the gate of the court of women. Luke's Simeon is portrayed as a waiting man. The only statement of the son of Hillel preserved in Jewish tradition stresses the importance of religious silence (silentio). A later Christian tradition describes Luke's Simeon as a great teacher of the law. This would equally apply to the son of Hillel. Later Christian tradition also claims that Luke's Simeon later became High Priest. The Acts of Pilate, an apocryphal book;

*for no apparent reason or plot introduces Rabban Gamaliel the elder, who in actual fact was the son of Hillel's Simeon, into the story of Karinus and Leucius, the alleged sons of Luke's Simeon. Gamaliel is not mentioned often enough in the apocryphal New Testament to allow the argument that this linking of Rabban Gamaliel, the son of Hillel's Simeon, with Karinus and Leucius, the alleged sons of Luke's Simeon, was a complete coincidence, p32-33.*

Rabbinic literature associates Hillel's son with saintliness. Luke's *εὐλαβής* corresponds to the Hebraic *hasid*. Luke associates Simeon especially with the Holy Spirit. Rabbinic literature associates the son of Hillel with the *ruah ha-qodes*. The son of Hillel was 'thoroughly taken up by the anti-Herodian and anti-Roman revolutionary messianic movement of his time especially from the late 20's B.C.E. on'. Luke's Simeon is portrayed earnestly waiting for the consolation of Israel. Jewish tradition associates the son of Hillel with a strong interest in the conversion of the Gentiles combined with Jewish particularism.

302. At the time he wrote the article he was working on a volume entitled: *Hillel the Palestinian, the Founder of Rabbinic Judaism; a Revisionary Study of His Life and Work*, Cutler, op.cit. p 29.
303. Brown rejects Cutler's argument because 'the style of the Greek indicates that an unknown person is being introduced to the reader', BIRTH, op.cit., p437. The Greek sentence may indeed give this indication, but this can be interpreted to mean that Simeon was unknown to Luke's readers. (As Brown himself states, and as we must expect, Luke's gospel was written for the Hellenistic side of the church in particular, and not necessarily to those who passed on the Lucan tradition.)
304. Jones, op.cit., p40-43.
305. The current phenomenon of the 'charismatic' and the appearance of such phenomena in the primitive church give a better explanation of the difference between Luke 2:29-32 and 2:34-35 than the one offered by Brown, namely that they come from different stages of Lucan redaction. Brown gives three reasons for this view:
  - a) There is a smooth transition between Luke 2:27 and 2:38. But there is just as smooth a transition between 2:27 and 2:28f. Brown admits this argument is not persuasive.
  - b) The other canticles were added later by Luke. This one (*nunc dimitis*) has clear parallels with the other canticles. Therefore it was probably added later. This argument depends of course upon Brown's theory about the other canti-

- cles, which we have not altogether accepted. However it must be admitted that his position is the best if our view is to be rejected.
- c) The second canticle (2:34-35) is quite unlike the other canticles. It is future tense rather than past. It predicts rather than recalls. Birth, op.cit. This we feel is Brown's weakest argument. In early Christian prophecy two kinds of utterance can be discovered. On the one hand prophecy may be defined as exhortation, upbuilding and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). This is the phenomenon most clearly evident in the case of Barnabas, who '*exhorted them all...for he was full of the Holy Spirit*' (Ac. 11.23-24, also Ac. 4.36; 15.31). Such exhortations would be full of the reiteration of the O.T. biblical content. Note the various '*prophetic*' sermons - Ac. 12.17f, 6.15f. On the other hand prophecy could also be manifested as specific predictions about the future (Ac. 11.28-30; 27.10-11). Both types of prophetic utterance are similarly evidenced in current '*charismatic*' movements, where the former type is usually an outpouring of biblical texts freshly minted. In such a *Sitz im Leben* there is no need to refer the two utterances of Simeon to different traditions or different stages of composition.
306. Goulder & Sanderson, op.cit., p23-24.
307. In discussing the allusions to the presentation of Samuel (1 Sam), Brown very wisely comments that Luke's method is not one of identifying figures in the infancy narratives with the O.T. characters; rather he uses pigments taken from O. T. Narratives to colour in the infancy narrative, Birth, op.cit., p451. This insight led Benoit to conclude that the O.T. parallels have not created the tradition, but that the tradition had been coloured in by the language and wealth of the O.T. stories. One wonders why, if Brown can see this, that he believes that Luke has created a setting rather than having received one (p448). For instance Marshall does not feel that a certain amount of reading back from the later destiny of Jesus in this narrative need deny that it is '*in substance historical*', Commentary, op.cit., p115.
308. Marshall comments as follows;
- The story is told throughout in a Palestinian setting .... Those who are prepared to accept the possibility of such events (i.e. revelatory events) will find no essential difficulty in the story ... The historical difficulties in the story are ... not compelling, Commentary, op.cit., p114-115.*
- 308b Laurentin, Structure, op.cit., p 56-60. He notes that the point of departure is the event of Christ and not the O.T. text, p 60-61.
309. Winter, '*On the Margin of Luke 1 and 11*', op.cit., p 103-107.
310. B. van Iersel, '*The finding of Jesus in the Temple*' p163, note 4.
311. Ellis, Luke, op.cit., p85, also Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p127.
312. Quoted in Geldenhuys, op.cit., p131, also Morris, Luke, op.cit., p91. Also Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p127.
313. Morris, Luke, op.cit., p91.
314. Henk J. de Jonge, '*Sonship, Wisdom, Infancy: Lk.2: 41-51a*', p317-324.
315. Winter, '*Luke 2.49 and Targum Yerushal*' op.cit.

316. Van Iersel, op.cit., p173, note 2.
317. Brown comments '*Overall, the scene is not implausible according to Jewish customs when youth learned ... commandments from the elders*', Birth, op.cit., p474. His final conclusion on the historicity of the narrative does not follow his logic at this point.
318. Creed, op.cit., p44.
319. Van Iersel, op.cit., p161-164.
320. Van Iersel, op.cit., p172-173.
321. Henk J. de Jonge op.cit., p353.
322. Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p125-126.
323. Brown adopts the position that the most we can be sure of from a historical point of view is that Jesus had a boyhood, just as much as we can be sure that Jesus was baptised from the narrative of Luke 3: '*the present setting and saying are no less and no more historical than the divine voice and its setting at the baptism of Jesus*', Birth, op.cit., p483. He rejects the view that we can accept an historical knowledge of Christ's unique Sonship at the age of twelve. He terms the narrative a '*biographical opohthegm*'. His reason for this seems to lie in the fact that the Lucan account falls within the general literary type of stories about the childhood of great men (e.g. Buddha, Osiris, Cyrus, Alexander, Josephus, Eliazar ben Hyracanis - p482). This position would seem to be unnecessarily sceptical. Firstly just because the form of the narrative has certain similarities with a common ancient form does not mean that the actual content is derived from the common form. Secondly, there is one important difference between the account of Jesus and the typical form. This is admitted by Brown. The main point of the typical narrative form is the surprising knowledge of the child. But in the Lucan narrative, '*The centre of the story is not the boy's intelligence, but his reference to God as his Father in verse 49*', p483. This is an emphasis which is found specifically in the Synoptic gospels. From this it may be argued that Luke has used the synoptic tradition to fill in the details of his narrative here, or equally that both this narrative and the synoptic gospels in general bear witness to a unique consciousness of Sonship in the person of Jesus. From a purely historical point of view there is no reason to accept the former rather than the latter.  
Thus Marshall, '*There is nothing surprising about such parallels, even today accounts of great men will devote attention to their precociousness (or lack of it!). Hence these parallels cannot be used to show that the story in Luke is legendary, but only that the motif is a common one*', Commentary, op.cit., p125-126.
324. Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 128.
325. In itself the story is a natural one, and does not include any supernatural features which might lead to sceptical estimates of its historicity, Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., p 126.
- 325b. Laurentin, Structure, op.cit., p 101-104.
326. Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 491. See also de Jonge, op.cit., p348-353.
327. It is rejected by Conzelmann, '*Luke's Place in the Development of Early Christianity*' p 302-304.
328. Marshall, Luke, New Bible Commentary, p 888-889.



329. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 1970, op.cit., p 132.
330. Guthrie, op.cit., p 313, F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles; The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, p 10-14.
331. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 1970, op.cit., p 133. Presumably Luke would have quoted Paul's letters had he written some time after the life and ministry of Paul. Hans Conzelmann recognises this difficulty, '*Luke's Place*', op.cit., p 229. His attempts at explanation are not very satisfactory p 307-308. He must assume the non-Pauline authorship of Colossians and Ephesians which is still in doubt, in order to promote the idea of a Pauline school which Luke had grown up in. He has to confess, '*we do not know the biographical and psychological reasons*', p 308. John Knox is fully aware of this problem. He mentions the '*impasse*' produced by the two conclusions reached by scholars on this subject, namely that '*Luke made little or no use of the letters and nowhere refers to Paul as writing them*' and that '*Luke could not have failed to know them*'. To escape this impasse he wants to question one of the premises; that Luke would have wanted to quote Paul's letters. He argues against this premise on the grounds that Luke was combating a Marcionite use of the Pauline letters, and concludes that Acts should be dated in AD 125, '*Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus*', p 279-286. This theory has one great weakness. Paul is Luke's hero in Acts. Is it likely that the author would not have quoted his hero if he could have? Knox's logic should have driven him to question rather a different premise, namely that Luke is much later than the career of Paul. An earlier dating of Luke-Acts (as given for instance by J.A.T. Robinson) explains Knox's '*impasse*'. Luke did not quote Paul because Paul's letters and ministry were still in progress when Luke was collecting his material.
332. See Erwin R. Goodenough '*The Perspective of Acts*', p 57. Goodenough's thoughts on dating are sound. His arguments for the fictional nature of Acts are however based upon an unfounded belief in the sacramental nature of the primitive church. Note the comment of C.J. Hemer '*Goodenough's notion of a fiction of the early sixties is not, I think, a very plausible combination*', '*Luke the Historian*', p 51.
333. See also Goodenough, op.cit., p 57-58.
334. Hans Conzelmann, '*Luke's Place ....*' op.cit., p 299.
335. J.A.T. Robinson, op.cit., p 86-90, also Guthrie, op.cit., p 308-310. The only plausible reason which may explain why Luke ended his second volume the way he did is given by Floyd V. Filson, '*The Journey Motif in Luke-Acts*', p 68-77.
336. This argument does of course depend upon a certain view of authorship in the pastoral epistles. See Guthrie, op.cit., p 198-246, and F.F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the Free Spirit*, p 442-444.
337. Morris, *Luke*, op.cit., p 22.
338. Morris, *Luke*, op.cit., and Guthrie, op.cit., p 307-308.
339. Eduard Schweizer believes the use of '*Son of God*' in Acts 13.33 in connection with the resurrection reflects a pre-Pauline and primitive Christology. In view of Rom. 1.3-4 we would affirm as against Schweizer that this use of '*Son of God*' is certainly not un-Pauline. Be that as it may, whether it reflects the theology of an early Paul or an earlier than Paul, the fact remains that this use of

'Son of God' is certainly early; *The Concept of the Davidic "Son of God" in Acts and Its O.T. Background*, p 186-205. For the primitive nature of the Christology in Acts see also H.N. Ridderbos, *The Speeches of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles*, The Tyndale N.T. Lecture, p 19-27; and F.F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle, op.cit.*, p 65-67.

340. Marshall, *The Resurrection in the Acts of the Apostles*, p 96-98.
341. C.K. Barrett, *Luke the Historian in Recent Study*, p 24.
342. Creed, *op.cit.*, p 23.
343. Barrett, *op.cit.*, p 59.
- 366a. Morris, *Luke, op.cit.*, p 42-44 and *The Cross in the N.T.* p 107-143.
- 344b. Ridderbos, *op.cit.*
345. Ridderbos, *op.cit.*, p 23f and 30-31 argues for an understanding of vicarious atonement based upon the Servant passages in Isaiah implicitly affirmed in Acts.
346. Marshall, *Luke, Historian... op.cit.*, p 170-175 and *'The Resurrection'* *op.cit.*, p 103-105.
347. Marshall, *'The Resurrection'* *op.cit.*, p 103-105. It seems quite reasonable to assume that the disciples first saw the cross as a disaster which was only overcome by their experience of the resurrection. Their only positive message in the beginning would have been that Jesus had risen. Later theological reflection would have caused them to re-interpret the cross in the light of the resurrection (see Ridderbos, *op.cit.*, p 23-24, 18).
348. On *'Early Catholicism'* see James P.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity, An Enquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, p 341-374.
349. Note C.J. Hemer *'We are not necessarily to take Paul against Acts, and we should not be pessimistic about the possibility of taking Paul with Acts.'* *op.cit.*, p 42 and 42-45. See also F.F. Bruce *'Is the Paul of Acts the Real Paul'* p 282-305.
350. J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p 86-117.
351. Kümmel, *Introduction, 1970, op.cit.*, p 105.
352. Barrett, *op.cit.*, p 65, Guthrie, *op.cit.*, p 106-107, Kümmel, *Introduction, 1970, op.cit.*, p 105, Morris, *Luke, op.cit.*, p 23. Conzelmann, *The Theology of Saint Luke*, p 134-135.
353. See Hans Conzelmann, *'Luke's Place'* *op.cit.*, p 298-299.
354. Bo Reicke, quoted by Morris, *Luke, op.cit.*, p 24 note 1 and 21 note 2, also J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p 14.
355. Marshall, *Luke, Historian... , op.cit.*, p 65.
356. Marshall, *Luke, Historian, op.cit.*, p 66.
357. J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*, quoting Bo Reicke and giving his own argument, p 28-29.

358. J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p 27 note 5F, discussing article by C.H. Dodd.
359. Guthrie, *op.cit.*, p106-109, Morris Luke, *op.cit.*, p 23-25.
360. Kümmel, Introduction, 1970, *op.cit.*, p 105.
361. J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p 13-30. For dating before AD 70 see also Goodenough, *op.cit.*, p 57.  
  
For an earlier dating of Luke see also C.J. Hewer, *op.cit.*, p 46-47. He notes that C.H. Dodd has rejected the argument basing a post AD 70 date on Luke 27, and the arguments of recent scholars who accept an earlier dating for Acts; F.F. Bruce, F.V. Filson, I.H. Marshall, A.J. Mattill, T.W. Manson.
362. J.A.T. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p 107-113, also Bruce, *New Testament Documents*, *op.cit.* p 12.
363. The comment of E. Käsemann expressed in his much-quoted statement '*One does not write the history of the church if one daily expects the end of the world*'. (W.C. van Unnik p 24) cannot be used against the idea that many may have written by AD 60. The argument is based upon a questionable understanding of the expectation of the parousia in the early church (See van Unnik, '*Luke-Acts, A Storm Centre in Contemporary Scholarship*' p 28).
364. Barrett, *op.cit.*, p 22. For traditional authorship, Guthrie, *op.cit.*, p 92-103; Morris, Luke, *op.cit.*, p 14-21; Marshall Luke, NBC, *op.cit.*, p 888-889. We are quite aware of the fact that Barrett does not take this to necessarily imply Lucan authorship by the companion of Paul.
365. F.F. Bruce, Acts in NBC., p 970.  
See also C.J. Hewer, *op.cit.*, on Luke's Sources, p49 and E.E. Ellis, '*The evidence for the presence in the Jerusalem church of the Virgin Mary and of the brothers of Jesus (Gal. 1:19; Acts 1:14:12:17:15:13: 21:10) is not without significance for this matter ... Prophecy and Hermeneutics*, *op.cit.*, p153.
366. Barrett, *op.cit.*, p12-15.
- 366b. Marshall, Luke, Historian ..., *op.cit.*, p54-57.
367. This conclusion has recently been supported by C.J. Hemer, *op.cit.*, p 29-34. Hemer takes Marshall's work as his starting point and explains in more detail what Marshall has dealt with rather summarily. He makes the point that ancient historiography was a '*mixed bag*' and that it is easy to make simplistic assumptions about Luke's place amongst ancient historians. Luke's accuracy must be tested on other grounds. Hemer also criticises scholars who use Luke '*Among the ancient historians*' (i.e. inaccurate historians) as an assumption against his accuracy (e.g. G. Bornkamm on Acts 16-17 as a source for the study of Paul p 42 note 2). Conzelmann similarly relegates the subject of Luke's links with contemporary historiography to secondary importance. '*Luke's Place*' *op.cit.*, p300 .
368. Dibelius, quoted in Barret, *op.cit.*, p26-30.  
In emphasising the literary form of Acts, Dibelius also tended to undermine the idea of Luke as a historian and replaced this with the idea of Luke as a creative writer who could easily distort the historical facts. Ernst Haenchen: *The Acts of the Apostles* p 33-34 .
369. Barrett, *op.cit.*, p30-36. Haenchen Acts, *op.cit.*, p46.
370. Barrett, *op.cit.*, p36-40. Haenchen, Acts, *op.cit.*, p47-48.

371. Ernst Haenchen, *The Book of Acts as Source Material for the History of Early Christianity*, p255-278., op.cit., Acts p145-156.
372. Hans Conzelmann, *Theology*, op.cit., p95-136, especially p131-136.
373. Hans Conzelmann, *Theology*, op.cit., p 150.  
Also *'Luke's Place'*, op.cit., p302-303.
374. Hans Conzelmann, *'Luke's Place'* op.cit., p298-309, especially p302-303.
375. For the postulation of a wide divergence between Paul in the epistles and Paul in Acts see also Philipp Vielhauer; *'On the "Paulinism" of Acts'* p 33-34. The wedge he drives between the two *'Pauls'* is not as great as that of Haenchen. We will note a few criticisms of his position, which we feel is nevertheless too extreme.
1. He compares the *'Areopagus'* speech with its *'natural theology'* with Romans, and its *'natural theology'*. He notes that the ideas of sin, wrath and grace are entirely absent from Acts, and that Acts gives the idea of a natural link between God and man. He does not mention Paul's argument about the standing of the natural man in Romans 2. This leaves one with an antithesis between the two theologies which is overdone (p 24-37). See on this F.F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle* op.cit., p 235-247, and *'Is the Paul of the Acts the real Paul?'* op.cit., p 301-303.
  2. He gives eight points indicating how *'Pharisaical'* Paul is in Acts and allows a certain amount of agreement in Paul's letters, but then he criticises the *'suspect motivations'* behind Paul taking a vow in order to appease the Judaisers. One wonders how legitimate it is to base historical arguments upon our present understanding of a man's motivations in the past (or Luke's portrayal of that motivation), p 38-40.
  3. He finds a contradiction between Acts 16.3 and Gal 5. 1-11. But here, and in fact with many of his comments one must ask how legitimate it is to compare an historical account of Paul's actions, as a travelling evangelist with Paul's doctrinal statement in epistles sent to the community of the redeemed. If this is taken into account the discrepancies between the two Pauls need not be forced into an unbridgeable chasm.
  4. He notes that Paul's eschatological kerygma in the epistles has been transformed into the non-eschatological continuity which Luke sees between the history of Israel and the history of the church (p 45- 49). On this question one may refer to James D.G. Dunn, who tends rather to speak of Paul's *'early catholicism'*, op.cit., p 344-346. Vielhauer believes the difference in Luke's theology on this issue indicates that there must be a temporal distance between the two (p 48). Is this a necessary conclusion? May not Luke have merely had a different perspective (i.e. an historical perspective) in the same age or epoch (See Goodenough, op.cit., p 57-58). One can only rule out this possibility with a reliance upon the *'theology of the delay'*.
376. e.g. Haenchen, *Acts*, op.cit., p 112-116.
377. Dunn, op.cit., p 341-344.
378. This was the major contribution of Sir William Ramsay.

379. Marshall, Luke, Historian, op.cit., p 70-72.  
Conzelmann, Theology, op.cit., p 69;

...the further question must be considered whether Luke really has a quite definite but incorrect conception. The expression ('between' Luke 17.11) indicates that Luke imagines that Judea and Galilee are immediately adjacent, and that Samaria lies alongside them, apparently bordering on both the regions.

380. Marshall, Luke Historian op.cit., p 69.
381. Edward M. Blaiklock, 'The Acts of the Apostles as a Document of First Century History', p 41-54. C.J. Hemer: op.cit., Also F.F. Bruce, Paul, Apostle, op.cit., on the authenticity of the latter part of Acts, p 160-172, 212-262, 286-299, 339-378. van Elderen: 'Some Archaeological observations on Paul's first missionary journey', p 151-161.
382. Bruce, Acts, Greek Text, op.cit., p 15-16.
383. F.F. Bruce, The N.T. Documents, op.cit., p 80-92, especially 82 and 90, and Joseph A. Fitzmyer 'Jewish Christianity in Acts in the Light of the Qumran Scrolls', p 233-254, 'They...provide concrete and tangible evidence for a Palestinian matrix of the early church as it is described in Acts.'
384. Marshall, Luke, Historian..., op.cit., p 64, 64-67.  
G.N. Stanton is of the opinion that Luke's alterations are stylistic and not theological. 'Presuppositions in N.T. criticism,' p 70 note 11.
385. Marshall, Luke Historian, op.cit., p 56-57.
386. Marshall, 'The Resurrection' op.cit., p 93-94.
387. Marshall, 'The Resurrection' op.cit., p 99-101.  
Dunn gives a useful examination of the various kerygmata in the N.T., op.cit., p 11-32. His main point is to emphasise the diversity of the various kerygmata (Jesus, Luke, Paul, John) though he does discover a basic unity in three points;

1. The proclamation of the risen, exalted Jesus
2. The call for faith and commitment
3. The promise of the Spirit, forgiveness etc, (p 30)

We do not take issue with the majority of his statements, but his stress on the diversity is to our view rather overdone in the following ways:

1. In the kerygma of Jesus, Dunn maintains that Jesus saw Himself as the instrument of the Kingdom rather than the object or context of the kerygma (p 13-16). This is in line with the common view of a low Christological consciousness of Jesus. But Jesus identified His own presence with the presence of the Kingdom. If this is correct then Jesus saw Himself as the instrument and the content of the kerygma.

2. He maintains that an 'explicit theology of the death of Jesus is markedly lacking in the kerygma of the Acts sermons' (p 17-18). True, the substitutionary

or sacrificial view is lacking (except for Acts 20. 28). But the cross as an event does dominate (2.23, 3.13; 5.30; 8.32-33; 10.39; 13.27-30) as that which fulfilled the plan of God (as in 1 Cor. 15 'according to the scripture' if these be taken as O.T. scriptures.) The understanding of the cross is that the death, resurrection and ascension are all part of one act of exaltation whereby Christ became the *αρχηγόν*, the pioneer or trail-blazer (3:15; 5:31, C.F.D. Moule, *The Christology of Acts* p 174). This single act of exaltation is a continuation of the journey motif in the gospel (Luke 9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28) which is already the beginning of the *αναλημψις* of Jesus.

3. Dunn believes the tension between fulfilment and imminent consummation is completely lacking in Acts (p 18). True, the tension may be lacking, but the sense of eschatological fulfilment is not lacking. This was an element emphasised by C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its developments; History and the Gospel*.

4. The strongest criticism against Dunn is his statement that there is hardly any role attributed to the exalted Jesus (p 19). This is a strange statement in view of the fact that Luke uses *κύριος* for God and for Jesus in a way that moves fluidly between the two; C.F.D. Moule, *The Christology of Acts*, op.cit., p 160-161. The implication is that what the Lord does in Acts, through the Spirit and the word is what the exalted Lord does. Other comments on Luke's view of the exalted Lord could be made.

5. The so-called 'subordinationist' Christology in Acts suffers for the same reason, amongst others, see Marshall, *The Resurrection* op.cit., and *Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 103.

If these criticisms of Dunn's analysis are allowed then the wedge between the kerygma of Luke in Acts and of Paul is not so great. Dodd's analysis like Dunn's, was perhaps overdone, but still has some validity. The truth lies somewhere between the two, and while the kerygma in Acts is definitely Lucan one cannot reject the possibility of traditional material being involved.

388. Distinctive elements are found in some of the sermons which are not necessarily Lucan, C.F.D. Moule, *The Christology of Acts*, op.cit., p 166-182; Ridderbos, op.cit., p 19-27. The objection is often made that the speeches of Peter and Paul are alike and that they all fit into the same mould. Dodd's now classical reply was that the early church did have a fixed form of proclamation, C.H. Dodd; *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, op.cit. Martin Dibelius undermined Dodd's thesis by pointing to the Lucan literary nature of the speeches. (Quoted in Eduard Schweizer, *Concerning the Speeches in Acts* p 208 and also Haenchen, *Acts*, op.cit., p 34-49). Dibelius' view has continued to enjoy support, Dunn, op.cit., p 11-32. However the reaction to Dodd has probably been overdone. It is still true that real parallels can be found between the basic content of Mark, Paul's summaries of the kerygma (e.g. 1 Cor. 15.1-4) and the speeches in Acts, Higgins, op.cit., p 78-91. For a balanced view one can refer to Ridderbos, op.cit.; F.F. Bruce, *Is the Paul of the Acts the Real Paul*, op.cit., p 299-304, and Marshall, *The Resurrection* op.cit., p 92-107, especially p 92-95.
389. Bruce, *Acts, Greek Text*, op.cit., p 18-21, J.A.T. Robinson, op.cit., p 80-85.
390. Marshall, *The Resurrection* op.cit., p 94-95.
391. Marshall, *Luke, Historian* op.cit., p 73, Guthrie, op.cit., p 326-330. Less forcibly Eduard Schweizer, *Concerning the Speeches in Acts*, p 208-214 on p 214.

- This is not to deny of course that the strong similarities between the sermons of Peter and Paul are in some sense due to Luke's literary moulding of his material, Moule, *The Christology of Acts*, op.cit., p 180 on the 'absentee Christology'. Schweizer, op.cit., p 208-214, is probably correct to attribute the overall structure to Luke and the contents to his source material, though we feel he goes too far when he says, 'basically the Paul of Acts speaks exactly like Peter' (p 212). The study of Moule shows that this comment is an over-simplification.
392. Hemer notes that we do have a great deal of external evidence for checking Acts and that this should not be set aside because of a dogmatic understanding of *Luke's Theology*, op.cit., p 34-40.
393. Thus Haenchen sees Luke's whole enterprise, whereby he 'turned historian' being initiated by the 'theological situation' in which Luke found himself, Acts, op.cit., (p 98-99). This 'theological situation' is for Haenchen the problem of the delay (p 95-96).
394. Ridderbos, op.cit., p 15-16.
395. For a criticism of an existential approach to Paul and Luke-Acts see Ulrich Wilckens, 'Interpreting Luke-Acts in a Period of Existentialist Theology' p 60-83.
396. Cullmann strongly repudiates this theology of the delay, *Christ and Time*, op.cit. See also van Unnik, op.cit., p 28, who questions the 'delay' argument.
397. Brown is another who rejects Conzelmann's systemisation of Luke. *Birth*, op.cit., p 274, note 38.
398. Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, op.cit., p 27.
399. Van Unnik asks why 'salvation history' must be seen so negatively and wonders whether there is not a reaction against German pietism in the negative attitude certain scholars feel towards the Lucan concept, op.cit., p 28-29. Wilckens shows clearly how the Paul of dialectical-existentialistic theology is not the historical Paul and that Luke's idea of redemptive history is thoroughly Biblical, Christian and indeed Pauline, Wilckens, op.cit., p 60-83. For his appreciation of Cullmann at this point see p 83 note 82.
400. Morris, *Luke*, op.cit., p 37-39. See also Ridderbos, op.cit., p 12-17. Wilckens defends this position by claiming that these scholars do not deny all eschatology to Luke. They merely claim that Luke has removed eschatology from a central to a peripheral position, op.cit., p 79 note 37. But if this was their position why would they be so negative (especially Haenchen) about Luke's theology of history?
401. Barrett, op.cit., p 71-76.
- Haenchen has himself rather softened the more radical estimation of Luke as the theologian of early Catholicism, Acts, op.cit., p 49. A recent criticism of this concept may be found in Dunn, op.cit., p 341-366 and Leon Morris 'Luke and Early Catholicism' p 60-75. Dunn points out that the fading of the urgent expectation of the parousia had already taken place in Paul before Luke-Acts (p 344-366). If early Catholicism is defined as a fading of the imminent parousia then it is found in the N.T. itself (p 351), Paul not excluded. It cannot therefore be used to date Luke-Acts as late. Dunn sees Luke as a compromise between the primitive period and early Catholicism.

*Luke was evidently aware of the danger of squeezing out the Spirit, of subordinating him to a church hierarchy, of confining him within set forms and rites, and so wrote as one who wanted to see the church of his own day both unified and open to the Spirit - open to the Spirit in the way the first Christians had been, unified in a way they had not (p 363). Morris is rather more forthright in his rejection of early Catholicism in Luke-Acts.*

402. Conzelmann, *Theology*, op.cit., p 193-4, note 5; 20 note 3; 22 note 2; 101 note 1; 18 note 1; 16 note 3; 48. 76. 183 note 2.

403. The following criticism may be made of Haenchen in particular:

- 1) He criticises Luke for having '*smoothed over*' all the difficulties in the early period, for projecting an image of unity where no unity existed, and for giving the idea of a '*trouble free*' movement of the gospel. Acts, op cit., p83-84, 88, 99-100, 102. But we must remember that most of our knowledge about the disunity, the problems and the pressures of the early church come precisely from the book of Acts. One wonders how one can read Acts and gain the impression of a smooth, trouble free progression of the Word (Persecution - 4.1-22; 5.17-26, 33-42. Disunity - 15.36-40 especially 15.1-5; 6.1-6).
- 2) Haenchen finds difficulties over the division between the Hellenists and the Hebrews. He initially criticises Luke for allowing the disunity to come out for a moment in Acts 6 despite the '*unity*' in the remainder of Acts (p 83-84), only to argue elsewhere that Luke has minimised these tensions (p 102-103, 88). Has Luke minimised them or let them appear? Haenchen first learns of these tensions from Acts, then projects into Acts a deeper cleft than the one portrayed by Luke, and then criticises Luke for having minimised them.
- 3) Haenchen maintains that Luke has no understanding of the Pauline notion of being '*in Christ*' (p 97). Luke must tie together the period of Jesus and the period of the Church by the progression of the Word of God (p 98). But in stating this, Haenchen must first reject Luke's own statement that Acts is what Jesus continued to do and teach through the Spirit (Ac.1.1), and secondly the radical cleft between the time of Jesus and the time of the church is a structure which scholars have superimposed upon Luke-Acts. A change certainly does occur, C.F.B.Moule, '*The Christology of Acts*', op.cit., p 159-160. See also hints of the Pauline '*corporate*' Christology p 180-181. On the links between the Pauline mysticism and Acts see Bruce, *Paul the Apostle*, op.cit., p 144-145.
- 4) One of Haenchen's basic reasons for believing that Luke is an author who was not a companion of Paul, but who wrote from a later age, is the discrepancy he finds between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the epistles. But almost all his reasons for this great discrepancy are open to question. True, Luke does condense things (p 105), and Luke does bring out the drama in a situation (p 106-107). True, Paul is rather less expressive about his miracles than Luke is in the Acts (p 113f). But can Gal 5.11 and Ac. 3 be opposed to each other on the grounds that Gal 5.11 says that Paul would never circumcise anyone? (p 89f). Gal 5.11 actually states that Paul



would never preach circumcision, and Paul's strong remarks are in the context of those who wanted to be circumcised as an indication of the fact that they wanted to submit again to the law. His basic argument is that if they are circumcised in such a spirit then they must be consistent with Jewish faith. They must then keep the whole law or be cursed (Gal.3.10). In such a case the death of Christ no longer avails for them (Gal.5.2-5). The circumcision of Timothy for practical reasons of avoiding unnecessary arguments with Jews on their missionary journeys was an entirely different context (Ac.16.3b and see 1 Cor.9.19-23). We do not regard Gunther Bornkamm's arguments, against 1 Cor.9 19-23 being taken as Paul's missionary practice in Acts to be decisive. *'The Missionary stance of Paul in 1 Cor.9 and in Acts'*, p 194-205. See further on this question F.F.Bruce *'Is the Paul of Acts the Real Paul?'*, op.cit., p 297-298, and F.F.Bruce, *Paul, Apostle* op.cit., p 213-216. Luke is said to know nothing of Paul's three years in Arabia (Gal.1.17). But what are we to make of Luke's 'many days' in Ac. 9.23? Does not the incidental nature of this reference heighten its genuineness? Luke is criticised because in Acts Paul is the missionary who is recognised by the twelve (p 89-91). But what of Gal.2.7-10? Luke is criticised for portraying Paul as a Jewish pharisee at heart (p 101). But what was Paul at heart? (Rom.9.1-5). His letters have struck many with their Jewishness, their rabbinical thinking, and their fundamentally Semitic character. Luke is said to have no knowledge of the Pauline understanding of the law and justification (p 112-113). What of Ac. 13.38-39; 15.10? See C.F.D.Moule *'The Christology of Acts'*, op.cit., p 174. Haenchen maintains that this is not the Pauline understanding of the law and justification. This may well be true. However it is an understanding of these matters, placed in the historical context of Paul's preaching and Paul's influence on Peter. Luke may not have understood these issues as clearly as Paul did, but then that is not strange. In Acts, Paul is said to be the miracle worker (p 113), in Paul's letters he is not. Haenchen does notice 2 Cor. 12.12. He does not mention Rom.15.19; 1 Cor.2.4-5; 2 Cor.13.3-4; Gal.3.5. Further one would not expect the apostle to continually mention his miracles. Someone who greatly admired him naturally would. Haenchen's point about Paul the orator in Acts and Paul the one of weak speech in the epistles perhaps has more substance. Haenchen does not accept the Lucan portrayal of the preaching of the resurrection as being the great cause of the persecution. However Luke's portrayal is not of a belief in the resurrection per se as the stumbling block, but the particular resurrection of a crucified Messiah whom the Jewish authorities had crucified (Ac. 2.23; 2.36; 3.14-15; 4.2 - 'proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead', 4.10; 5.28, 30-31). This is precisely the stumbling block which Paul outlines in 1 Cor.1.18-31.

We have not mentioned the great number of correspondences and agreements between the Paul in Acts and the Pauline epistles, but these can be shown to outweigh the problem mentioned by Haenchen. See e.g. Hemer, op.cit., p 42-45, F.F.Bruce, *Paul, Apostle*, op.cit., and *'Is the Paul of Acts the Real Paul?'*, op.cit., p 282-305. His fundamental reason for rejecting Luke as the author is questionable. Hence his fundamental reason for therefore denying Luke's historical worth is also questionable. Notice the view of Luke's use of earlier tradition in Higgins, op.cit., p 85-89. The relationship between Acts and the Epistles is brought out in a novel way by Ernst Käsemann *'Ephesians and Acts'*, p 288-297. His point is that both writings evidence the same transition between the apostolic and 'early catholic' periods. His argument assumes the non-Pauline authorship of Ephesians. This assumption is certainly not acceptable to many N.T. scholars. If Ephesians is Pauline, then Käsemann's work becomes further evidence of the link between Paul and Acts. Further, the acceptance of a great deal of creativity on the part of the author of Acts need not require a rejection of the companion of Paul as the author. See A.J.Mattill, *'The purpose of Acts, Schneckenburger Reconsidered'*, p 108-122, especially p 115-122.

404. Marshall, *Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 62.
405. This point depends of course upon the assumption that the infancy narratives were collected along with the other Lucan material. This is an assumption which has no proof. But one must also deny it with no proof. It remains a good possibility, especially if Luke had some contact with the family of Jesus.
406. G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, Haggadic Studies, p 1-10, especially p 7.
407. Addison G. Wright, *'The Literary Genre Midrash'*, p 106-108. For the difficulties in defining midrash, see also E. E. Ellis *'Midrash, Targum and New Testament Quotations'* in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic* op.cit., p 189-200.
408. Wright, op.cit., p 110 note 269.
409. One typical example on Gen 11:4 will illustrate the method;

*AND THEY SAID: COME LET US BUILD A CITY, AND A TOWER (Gn 11.4). R. Judan said: The tower they built, but they did not build the city. An objection is raised: But it is written, And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower. Read what follows, he replied: And they left off to build the city, the tower, however, not being mentioned. R. Hiyya b. Abba said: A third of this tower which they built sank (into the earth), a third was burnt, while a third is still standing. And should you think that it (the remaining third) is small - R. Huna said in R. Idi's name: When one ascends to the top, he sees the palm trees below him like grasshoppers (Bereshith Rabbah 34,13) Wright, op.cit., p 125.*

410. For which see Montgomery, *Principalities and Powers* op.cit., p 74-95.
411. Wright, op. cit., p 133.
412. Wright summarises as follows;

*A midrash is a work that attempts to make a text of scripture understandable, useful and relevant for a later generation. It is the text of Scripture which is the point of departure, and it is for the sake of the text that the midrash exists. The treatment of any given text may be creative or non-creative but the literature as a whole is predominantly creative in its handling of the biblical material. The interpretation is accomplished, sometimes by re-writing the biblical material, sometimes by commenting upon it. In either case the midrash may go so far afield as it wishes provided that at some stage at least there is to*

*be found some connection implicit or explicit, between the biblical text and the midrashic composition.* Wright, op.cit., p 137.

According to this definition certain primitive Jewish writings are clearly midrashic. The Passover Haggadah is certainly a primitive form of midrash. The Genesis Apocryphon is partly midrashic and partly a specifically apocryhal writing. The homily of wisdom in Wisdom 11–19 is a typical case of midrash. On the other hand the writings of Josephus, while making use of midrashic material, are not midrashic themselves. Josephus declares his intention in his prologue to write a history of the Jewish people, and this is his prime concern. He does not write for the sake of explaining any particular biblical text but rather makes use of biblical texts, midrashic legends and various historical materials for the service of his historical work. Similarly the book of Chronicles is not midrash. While it uses many midrashic techniques (i.e. the play on words, the adaption of biblical texts), *'the material borrowed is used as data to fill out a new historical work'*. The case of the Qumran Pesarim is more complicated. This literature includes the commentary of biblical texts, the attempt to discover predictions from the biblical texts relating to the eschaton, the actualisation of scripture and the attempt to find hidden meanings in the scripture. However it does not include the citation of other biblical books or the opinions of various teachers. This has led some scholars to reject the application of midrash to this literature. It has been regarded as biblical commentary, or apocalyptic. Others have included it under this genre because of its other characteristics, while still others have advocated an entirely new literary genre which they term *'midrash pesher'*. The significance of this literature is its possible links with the origins of the N.T. Wright concludes that in view of the fact that the biblical text is the starting point of the whole system this literature should be called simply midrash. The attempt to discover apocalyptic fulfilments is nevertheless founded upon the O.T. first and contemporary events are only connected with such predictions secondarily. By way of contrast the N.T. begins with contemporary events and then seeks to discover the O.T. predictions.

413. Wright, op.cit., p 439.

414. Wright, op.cit., p 444.

415. W.D. Davies, (op.cit., p 208-209) disagrees with K. Stendahl on this vital point. In his study of the formula quotations (1:23; 2.6,15,18,23) Stendahl proposed that the nearest method to Matthew's was the pesher technique found at Qumran. Davies pertinently asks

*whether there is not a considerable difference between the formula quotations and the pesher in use at Qumran. In the former, the 'historical' events seem to determine the incident and nature of the quotation which serves as a closure to a pericope, that is, the scriptural quotation subserves the event. In the latter, the opposite is the case; the scriptural text is normative for the event, not a commentary upon this, but its ground.*

416. Brown has taken note of Wright's work and has an appendix of his own on this subject, but unfortunately does not take Wright's advice. He makes no clear distinction between Jewish and Christian midrash and tends to project the midrashic methods of Judaism into the infancy narratives. Laurentin uses different language to indicate a similar view to Wright. He notes that midrash can be used in a wide variety of literary compositions. Hence to define Lk. 1-2 as midrash is not particularly definitive. In his view Lk. 1-2 is in fact historical narrative, despite its use of midrash, *Structure*, op.cit., p 96-97.
417. W. D. Davies holds that both infancy narratives cannot be '*strictly historical*', op.cit., p 63. Ellis, *Prophet and Hermeneutic*, op.cit. speaks clearly in terms of '*Christian midrash*' and notes that the present event is primary while the O.T. text is secondary, see p 204 on Mt. 1.21.
418. Marshall, *Luke Historian...*, op.cit., p 52 and p 2-152 on '*History or Theology?*' See also C.K. Barrett, op.cit., p 52 for a similar statement.
419. Kingsbury has shown that Matthew understands salvation-history in two epochs, the epoch of Israel, of promise, of the O.T., and the epoch of fulfilment, of Jesus from his birth to his parousia. He further shows that the pre-Easter Jesus is linked to the post-Easter presence of Jesus in the community by this concept of salvation history. However he strongly denies that Matthew has to read back the time of the church into the time of Jesus so as to make the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel a fictional one. Within the broad outline of the time of Jesus (from birth to Parousia) as the time of eschatological fulfilment, Matthew has divided up this time structurally so that birth, proclamation, pre-Easter preparation for the cross, and post-Easter Lordship are distinct periods in themselves. Matthew does therefore have an interest in the past for its own sake. He has not '*reduced his sense of history to the single point of the present*' (p 39 for his argument, see p 7-25 for the structure of Matthew, and p 25-39 for Matthew's concept of salvation-history. Kingsbury. op.cit. ).
420. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 35-36 and *Virginal Conception*, op.cit., p 31f.
421. Fitzmyer, *The Virginal Conception* op.cit., p 562.
422. E.L. Abel, '*The Genealogy of Jesus O XPICTOC*' op.cit., p 203.
423. Machen, *Virgin Birth*, op.cit., p 206-209; F.F. Bruce, '*Genealogy*' in *New Bible Dictionary*, p 459.
424. Clark H. Pinnoch, '*Genealogy*' p 675-677.
425. Marshall gives a thorough treatment of this problem. We quote his conclusion.

*It is only right ... to admit that the problem caused by the existence of the two genealogies is insoluble with the evidence presently at our disposal. To regard the lists, however, as merely literary constructions is to go beyond the evidence. Commentary op. cit., p 157-159, and further discussion p 159-161 .*

426. See also W.D.Davies '*Both accounts cannot be factually true and their extreme divergence necessarily casts doubt on the strictly historical validity of both,*' op.cit., p 63.
427. See further our general comment on Brown's work below, point 8, note 433.
428. Strauss, op.cit., p 122.
429. Fitzmyer, op.cit., '*The Virginal Conception*', p 564 also gives a list. Brown shows that the parallels point to a common source for both infancy narratives which is earlier than Matthew and Luke. Birth, op.cit., p 33-35 and his comment on page 106. For a positive view of the historicity of the infancy narrative in this connection see Paul Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, p 79-80.
430. Brown, '*The Problem...*', op.cit., p 26-29, Fitzmyer, '*The Virginal Conception*', op.cit. p 522-560.
431. Manuel Migneuns, '*Mary a Virgin? Silence in the New Testament*', p 9-19.
432. e.g. I.H.Marshall, *The Origin of N.T.Christology*, op.cit., p 57-58, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus*, op.cit.
433. *The Birth of the Messiah* by Raymond Brown.

Raymond Brown's book is a masterly and exhaustive examination of the infancy narratives. We have often followed him and often been influenced by his thought. However in addition to the criticisms just given, we would offer a few further critical remarks.

1. With both infancy narratives, Brown assumes the later dating of the gospels (p 45-48, 235-239). This, as J.A.T. Robinson has shown, cannot be assumed. The earlier dating can of course never be proved. However we have given reasons for accepting it. If one adds to this the fact that certain common elements of the infancy narratives preceded the narratives themselves in time ( p 32), and the probability of the proto-Luke hypothesis, then one becomes hard-pressed to deny the influence of a family tradition. This leads to the next point.

2. Brown cautiously but definitely rejects the influence of family tradition for the major part of both infancy narratives ( p 517-531 and elsewhere in the commentary). This conclusion could be reasonable, given the later dating of both gospels. It becomes rather more difficult to accept given the earlier dating.

3. This rejection of family tradition is possibly why Brown poses the either/or dichotomy of the sources being either historical or a collection of other factors ( as given in the text above).

4. The rejection of the possibility of family tradition also leads Brown to his distinction between historical evidence and '*verisimilitude*' (p 158-190, 225-229). We have already given some criticisms of this distinction. Given the total absence of family tradition such a distinction may be tenable. But can we use such a distinction if the tradition may have been mediated originally by the family of Jesus ( i.e. James)?

5. Brown usually accepts the less radical forms of the midrashic theory of interpretation in discussing the present form of the Lucan and Matthean infancy narratives. But if we accept the earlier dating for Matthew and Luke, can we allow for such a long and involved development of the tradition between the time when the family influence died out and when the present gospel narratives were written? This is questionable ( see note 215 above on the virgin birth).

6. Despite the fact that Brown gives a detailed exegesis of each pericope, he still really approaches the infancy narratives from a dogmatic perspective. The real issue is still the virgin birth. The infancy narratives are therefore not allowed to speak for themselves. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

7. Brown's view of the development of N.T. Christology by a successive reading back of the moment when Christ's Sonship was revealed is linked to his depreciation of the historicity of the infancy narratives. However, not all scholars would accept this 'low' Christological consciousness for the historical Jesus ( e.g. Marshall *The Origin of N.T. Christology*, op.cit., G.E. Ladd, *A Theology of the N.T.* op.cit. This tends to undermine his critical hypothesis. Furthermore we may question whether N.T. Christology ever developed in such a systematic and logical fashion, and whether a more 'advanced' Christology need necessarily be later than a more 'primitive' Christology. May not different areas of the early church have developed Christologies in different directions? Why must the logical progression of thought be linked to temporal development?

8. His rejection of the historicity of the infancy narratives is not based upon very persuasive arguments.

1. We have criticised his rejection of family tradition.
2. His belief that the two infancy narratives are irreconcilable is one of the strangest elements in his otherwise weighty scholarship. We have already commented on the problem raised by Lk.2.39 and Matt. 2.14 and the different genealogies. The different emphasis on the place of residence need hardly be forced into an insurmountable contradiction. The same applies to the fact that the two narratives are told from a different point of view. If these few problems cannot be outweighed by the eleven essential agreements between the narratives, then one wonders whether any historical documents can ever be reconciled. Furthermore, it is not enough to describe a harmonization of the four difficulties as 'ingenious' or 'apologetic'. A long tradition of reputable scholars has felt that harmonization is warranted by the evidence.
3. Brown's comments on Matthew's folkloric tendencies reveal his personal (though not methodological) rejection of the miraculous in certain areas. We have accepted that the way in which the star is said to have 'moved' may be descriptive. But angelic appearances in dreams are still accepted as a real phenomena by many scholarly twentieth century Christians, and Matthew's other three 'folkloric' tendencies are only folkloric if one accepts Brown's concept of verisimilitude.
4. Why must great literary skill exclude historicity? Is there any evidence that Luke's portrayal of John's relationship to Jesus is not historical? Can we be dogmatic about Luke being in error regarding the census?

We conclude that Brown's negative conclusion is not necessary. A more balanced view of the relationship between history, midrash and allusive theology in Lk. 1-2 is found in Laurentin, *Structure*, op.cit., p 116-119. He uses the different parts of a musical composition to illustrate this in similar fashion to our use of the building analogy.

434. Gore, *op.cit.*, p 64.

435. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, *op.cit.*, p 176.

1. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., points out that in the account of Jesus' birth in Luke 2 the emphasis falls very obviously on the angelic revelation to the shepherds and the reactions of the various parties rather than on the account of the actual birth ( p 410-411); and even in that section which deals with his birth (Lk.2.1-6) the description of the setting ( Lk.2.1-5) is far more detailed than the mention of the birth ( 2.6-7). *'And indeed, in the second part, more attention is paid to the placing of the baby in the manger than to the birth'* ( p 412).
2. H.H.Oliver, op.cit., p 202-226; Paul S.Minear, *'Luke's use of the birth stories'*, op.cit., p 111-130; I.H. Marshall, *Luke, Historian*, op.cit. Laurentin's approach to the structure of Lk. 1-2 is similar to ours at many points. His analysis of the elements in each narrative section does not however bring out the eschatological or prophetic dimension in the text, *Structure*, op.cit., p 23-25.
3. The structuralist analysis of the infancy narratives then provides the perspective to be followed in the exegesis of each pericope.
4. The author, text, receiver aspect of linguistic semiotics is discussed in some detail by Vern Poythress, *'Analysing a Biblical Text. Some Important Linguistic Distinctions'*, p 113-131.
5. e.g. Louis Hjelmslev of Copenhagen, discussed by Edgar McKnight, op.cit., p 100.
6. McKnight, op.cit., p 104-107.
7. Robert A. Spivey, *'Structuralism and Biblical Studies. The Uninvited Guest'*, p 142-143.
8. Robert C. Culley, *'Structural Analysis. Is it Done with Mirrors?'*, p 169 and the discussion on *'Author, Reader and Text'* p 166-169.
9. McKnight, op.cit., p 97-99. The relationship between diachronic and synchronic analysis in terms of the view of man which they presuppose is discussed by Daniel Patte, op.cit., p 9-17.
10. McKnight, op.cit., p 98-99.
11. Poythress, *'Analysing a biblical text, some important linguistic distinctions'*, op.cit., p 115.
12. Anthony C.Thiselton, *'Semantics and New Testament interpretation'*, op.cit., p 79-82.
13. McKnight, op.cit., p 126-138, quote from p 126.
14. Spivey, op.cit., p 137-138.
15. Gerard Meagher, op.cit., p 164-177.
16. McKnight, op.cit., p 127f.



17. A good example of this method is given by Patte, op.cit., p 53-75.
18. Thiselton, *'Semantics and N.T.interpretation'*, op.cit., p 82.
19. Thiselton gives a clear description of this idea in *'Semantics and N.T.interpretation'*, op.cit., p 82-84 and shows how important this has become in linguistic theory. See also Patte, op.cit., p 25-26.
20. McKnight, op.cit., p 155-158.
21. Culley, op.cit., p 171-178 and Dan O.Via, *'A structuralist approach to Paul's Old Testament Hermeneutic'*, p 201-220, especially p 204.
22. A.J.Greimas' model is discussed by McKnight, op.cit., p 262f, by Patte, op.cit., p 41-43, by Richard Jacobson, *'The structuralists and the Bible'*, p 146-164, especially p 163, and by Galland, op.cit., p 1-21.
23. McKnight, op.cit., p 263, see also p 188 and for an example of this analysis p 285-286.
24. A.C. Thiselton, *'Keeping up with recent studies 11, Structuralism and Biblical Studies, Method or Ideology?'* p 329-335.
25. McKnight, op.cit., p 91-92.
26. Daniel Patte, *What is Structural Exegesis?* p 1.
27. McKnight, op.cit., p 95-97.
28. McKnight, op.cit., p 145-146.
29. Jens Ihwe, *'On the foundations of a general theory of narrative structure'*, p 10.
30. Vern S. Poythress, *'Structuralism and Biblical Studies'*, p 228.
31. Ihwe, op.cit., p 5-13; W.Kummer, *'Outlines of a Model for a Grammar of Discourse'*, p 29-53.
32. Poythress, *'Structuralism and Biblical Studies'*, op.cit., p 229; *'Analysing a Biblical text: What are we after?'*, p 319-331.
33. Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*.
34. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, op.cit., p 60.
35. Ricoeur, op.cit., p 78.
36. Ricoeur, op.cit., p 78-79.
37. Ricoeur, op.cit., p 79.
38. Ricoeur, op.cit., p 22-23.

39. Ricoeur, *op.cit.*, p 6.
40. Ricoeur, *op.cit.*, p 2.
41. Ricoeur, *op.cit.*, p 41.
42. Ricoeur, *op.cit.*, p 16.
43. Ricoeur, *op.cit.*, p 21.
44. Thiselton, *'Keeping up with recent studies'*, *op.cit.*
45. McKnight, *op.cit.*, p 305.
46. Dan O. Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament. A Structuralist Approach to Hermeneutic*, p 1-6.
47. Via, *Kerygma and Comedy*, *op.cit.*, p 8 and H.C. du Toit, *What is a Colon?*, p 1-10.
48. Robert Culley, *'Structuralism and Biblical Studies'*, p 225.
49. Gerard Meagher, *'The Prophetic Call Narrative'*, *op.cit.*
50. Via, *Kerygma and Comedy*, *op.cit.*, p 28-31.
51. Apart from the works already cited ( McKnight, Patte, Poythress, Via, Thiselton, (*'Keeping up with recent studies'*) useful introductions to the subject are to be found in Bernard C. Lategan, *'Directions on Contemporary Exegesis, Between Historicism and Structuralism,'* p 18-30, A.C. Thiselton *'Semantics and New Testament interpretation'*, and for an introduction to the work of A.J.Greimas see Corina Galland, *'An introduction to the method of A.J.Greimas'*, in *The New Testament and Structuralism*, p 1-21.
52. I. H. Marshall, *Luke, Historian*, *op.cit.*
53. Matthew's infancy narrative has been structurally analysed in the 1977 edition of *Neotestamentica*, p 11-14. The entire edition is devoted to Matt.1-13. The use of the '*colon*' in their analysis is a rather different method of structural exegesis. It falls under the category of linguistic rather than narrative structural analysis.
54. Krister Stendahl, *'Quis et Unde? An analysis of Matt.1-2'*, p 94-105, see p 96.
55. W.D.Davies, *op.cit.*, draws attention to the idea of '*new creation*' in the title ( p 67-70), i.e. that it harks back to Gen.1.1. Davies also finds the idea of the new creation in the mention of the work of the Holy Spirit ( Matt.1.18-25 & Gen.1.1, p 70-71), and in the parallelism between the two accounts of creation (Gen. 1 and 2) and the two accounts of Christ's origins ( by genealogy, Matt. 1.1-18, and by a creative work of the Spirit, 1.18-25, p 71-72).
56. P.P.A.Kotzé, *'The structure of Matt.1'*, p 11-12.
57. Davis, *'The fulfilment of creation'*, *op.cit.*, p 520-535.

58. Davis, *The fulfilment of creation*, op.cit., p 521.
59. Davis, *The fulfilment of creation*, op.cit., p 529-530.
60. W.D.Davies, op.cit., p 72,73.
61. The question of the unity of Isaiah is not vital at this point. The reconstructions of recent scholars would have been far from Matthew's understanding of Isaiah, which is our concern. The unity of Isaiah has been defended by O.T.Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah*, E.J.Young, op.cit., p 3-21, and R.K.Harrison, op.cit., p 764-800.
62. The weakness of Brown's understanding of Matt.1-2 is his failure to grasp the centrality of the eschatological note. Following Stendahl '*Quis et Unde?*' he sees Matthew's essential message in terms of *Who and How?* The '*Who*' is answered in Jesus as the Son of God. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 133-143. However, '*Son of God*', is not used at all in Matt.1.18-25, and Brown does not see the eschatological emphasis in '*Emmanuel*'. Stendahl has grasped the centrality of Matthew's eschatological emphasis; '*In Jesus' messianic deed God visits his people and sets them free from the hardships which their sins have justly caused*'. The child is '*given the name Jesus, i.e. he comes with the bliss of the age to come, Emmanuel*'. '*Quis et Unde?*' op.cit., p 103,104.
63. Again the exact date of Daniel is not vital to our study at this point. Matthew would have accepted the authorship of Daniel, the '*prophet*' at face value.
64. On this point see Lorman Petersen, op.cit., p 120-138.
65. The geographical interest in Matthew's fulfilment formulae have been analysed by Stendahl, '*Quis et Unde?*' op.cit.
66. See p 106-107 above and notes.
67. Minear, '*Luke's Use*', op.cit.
68. Marshall, *Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 118-119.
69. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 402.
70. See p 152 above.
71. Marshall, *Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 107-111.
72. See p 39-42 above.
73. In the previous chapter we concluded that this was the best interpretation of this difficult verse, see above p 143 and notes.
74. See Tatum, '*The Epoch*', op.cit., p 184-195.
75. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., comments;

*The reference in the Nunc Dimittis to  
Simeon's willingness to die has led to the  
plausible supposition that Luke thinks of*

him as an old man. (p 438). Moreover, he is duplicating the two waiting figures, "on in years" (1.7) with whom he opened the infancy narrative; for Simeon is ready to die, and Anna is well on in years ( p 466).

76. Brown, Birth, op.cit., comments;

*I contend that JBap himself belongs to the period of Jesus in Luke's divisions of salvific history; that is why this birth is surrounded with the messianic joy that surrounds the coming of Jesus. But his parents and the circumstances of his origins belong to the period of Israel ( p 269).*

77. See p 296 above.

78. The concept of two ages co-existing is common to N.T. scholarship. This concept is especially evident in G.E.Ladd's understanding of N.T. Theology, A Theology of the N.T., op.cit., and The Presence of the Future.

79. See p 122-125 above.

80. Marshall, Commentary, op.cit., comments, 'In the birth narrative the emphasis is on prophetic inspiration heralding the arrival of the new era.' ( p 58).

81. This is noted by Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 271, though we do not share his concept of the part which Daniel played in Luke's narrative.

82. Ellis, Luke, op.cit., special note on 'Jesus, John, and late Jewish Messianic Expectation', p 69-70.

83. On the eschatological joy of vs. 15 see Schneider, op.cit., p 45-46.

84. Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 356, and note 57, following Gunkel, notes how the Magnificat is primarily an eschatological hymn and poses the question whether eschatological hymns can be regarded as a literary type.

85. See p 28 above.

86. See p 149 above.

87. Marshall, Luke Historian, op.cit., p 123-124.

88. Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 426-427.

89. See p 149 above.

90. This is discussed by Marshall, Luke Historian, op.cit., p 120-121.

91. In further support of this see Otto Piper, 'The Virgin Birth,' p 131-148, especially p 145, and Laurentin, Structure, op.cit., p 104.

92. For instance the study of Leaney, *'The birth narratives,'* op.cit., p 158-166.
93. e.g. p 26-27 above.
94. Piper, op.cit., p 145.
95. One cannot determine exactly whether the tradition was transmitted directly or indirectly, immediately or ultimately, see p 150-151 above.
96. Kingsbury, op.cit., p 36.
97. Kingsbury, op.cit., p 7-36.
98. Stendahl, *'Quis et Unde?'*, op.cit. Kingsbury, op.cit., has correctly criticised Stendahl for seeing a predominantly apologetic interest in the infancy narrative and has proposed that the real motivation of the evangelist is positively Christological. The only point on which Kingsbury is subject to justifiable criticism is in his contention that *'Son of God'* is Matthew's most important Christological title. Barnes Tatum has shown that *'Son of David'*, is far more important for Matthew. Tatum, *'The origin of Jesus Messiah'*, p 534-535.
99. We accept the reading of papyrus 1., Sinaiticus, C.K.L.P etc as against the old Italian readings a, aur, b, c, d, f, etc. and Theophilus, Irenaeus etc., though this cannot be certain. The point we are making would not be much affected if it read *Χριστου* instead of *Ιησου Χριστου*. Greek New Testament, op.cit.
100. Barnes Tatum, *'The origin'*, op.cit., p 528f is one of a number of recent scholars who emphasises the importance of *'Son of David'*, for Matthew's genealogy.
101. R.H.Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, op.cit., p 109-111, Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, op.cit., p 111-133.
102. Ladd, *Theology*, op.cit., p 140-143. He is followed by Kingsbury, op.cit., p 73-74.
103. After a careful examination of the subject W.D. Davies cautiously accepts the theory that the three fourteens are a gematria on the name David, op.cit., p 74-77.
104. *Schlatter has found in the contrast between Jesus, the new King, and Herod, the reigning King, a clue to Matt. II, Kings are meeting there. This certainly is one of the motifs in Matt.II, because in II.1-12 the term "king" occurs three times. The Messianic king must come to terms with the rulers of this world, and their encounter must be described.*  
W.D. Davies, op.cit., p 77.
105. See note 98 above.
106. Kingsbury, op.cit., p 42-48.
107. We have noted the importance of the name *'Jesus'* in Matthews gospel, p 223 above.

108. Fuller, Foundations, op.cit., p 93, quoting Bultmann.
109. Fuller, Foundations, op.cit., p 89-93, Cullmann, Christology, op.cit., p 239-240.
110. Cullmann, Christology, op.cit., p 238-239.
111. Cullmann, Christology, op.cit., p 242.
112. Cullmann, Christology, op.cit., p 242.
113. Brown, Birth, op.cit., comments, *'in the coming of Jesus the Messiah, the presence of God has made itself felt in an eschatological way... Jesus is the final and once-for-all manifestation of God's presence with us.'* (p 153)
114. Nixon, op.cit., p 813. The Matthean identification of Jesus with God as *'God with us'*, is supported by a consideration of Matthew's use of *εγω* in 14.27. Kingsbury believes this phrase must be taken as a divine revelation formula. Its use is intimately connected with the Matthean understanding of Jesus as the Son of God. Kingsbury, op.cit., p 66, 69-70.
115. Marshall, Luke Historian, op.cit., p 168-169 and 88-91.
116. A.R.C. Leaney, A Commentary on the Gospel According to Luke, p 34-37, Ellis, Luke, op.cit., p 10.
117. Eduard Schweizer, *'The Davidic "Son of God"'*, op.cit., p 186-191.
118. See p 153-154 above.
119. Marshall, Luke Historian, op.cit., p 167.
120. To translate the full sentence; *'One must accede to the allusive plan of the theology to fully grasp that the assimilation of Jesus to Yahweh is the final word of the Christology of Lk. 1-2'*, Structure, op.cit., p 130.
121. Marshall, Luke Historian, op.cit., p 167.
122. See p 131 above.
123. Marshall, Luke Historian, op.cit., p 92-102, 103-215.
124. Marshall, Luke Historian, op.cit., p 98.
125. Oliver, op.cit., p 222.
126. See p 130 above.
127. See p 153 above. A useful treatment of Luke's Christology in the infancy narrative will be found in Josef Ernst, op.cit., p 133-134.

128. Minear, *'The interpreter and the birth narratives,'* op.cit.
129. Minear, *'The interpreter,'* op.cit., p 10.
130. Minear, *'The interpreter,'* op.cit., p 10-18.
131. See p 100 above.
132. Needless to say this term is not to be confused with Arnold Toynbee's notion of *'challenge and response'*.
133. Conzelmann, *Theology*, op.cit., p 102.
134. Marshall, *Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 192-195, 202, 204.
135. Conzelmann, *Theology*, op.cit., p102.
136. Marshall, *Luke Historian*, op. cit., p 194.
137. Marshall, *Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 126-127.
138. Filson, *'The journey motif in Luke-Acts,'* op.cit., p 68-77.
139. This is noted by Meyer, op.cit., p 36 and note 12; Ellis Luke, op.cit., p 85 commenting on Lk.2.47.
140. See p 122-125 above and notes.
141. See p 58 above, and Laurentin, *Structure*, op.cit., p 33-36.
142. Plummer, op.cit., p 59.
143. H.F. Wickings has recently proposed that the infancy narratives arose due to the inroads of gnostic teachings in the early church. He feels they were part of the churches answer to the resulting heresies of docetism and adoptionism. Despite the plausibility of some of his remarks his proposal suffers from the insurmountable problem of absolutely no evidence from the infancy narratives themselves. He never quotes or attempts to exegete a single verse in either infancy narrative to support his contention. The truth of the matter is that apologetic motives are extremely difficult to find in Lk.1-2 and are minimal in Matt.1-2. H.F. Wickings, *'The Nativity Stories and Docetism,'* p 457-460. Waetjen, op.cit., p 219, completely rejects an apologetic motive for Matthew's infancy narrative. See also Michael Krämer, op.cit., p 12-19.
144. Harrington, *'The annunciation,'* p 306-315; Roger Mercurio, op.cit., p 144, both make this point.
145. Plummer, op.cit., p 70, see also Creed, op.cit., p 42-43, *'By the response which they make to the Christ, the thoughts of men's hearts will stand revealed.'*
146. Browning, op.cit., p 47.

147. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 460-461, believes it is quite wrong to construe the falling and rising as if it applied to those who both fall and rise. He holds that some fall, while others rise. This is certainly correct in the context of Simeon's utterance and the O.T. background of thought. But as Brown himself so often mentions the influence of various O.T. factors and the tradition received is usually combined with the influence of the post-resurrection community and the theology of Luke. There seems to be no good reason why Luke did not understand this falling and rising as having a reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus and the experience of the believer in union with him. Here is one case where the text is understood far better if one conceives of two historical settings for the origin of the narrative, one in the original setting and another in the prophetic community of the primitive church. Thus Marshall, *Commentary*, op.cit., p 122, takes the opposite view and believes the structure of the greek sentence is better explained by one group that both falls and rises, though he does mention the possibility of the other view.
148. See p 126 above.
149. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 353 and note 45.
150. Laurentin, *Structure*, op.cit., p 82-85 and Tannehill, op.cit., p 267-275.
151. Barrett, op.cit., W.C. Robinson, *Preaching the Word of God*, p 131-136.
152. See p 122-125 above and notes.
153. Marshall, *Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 157-189, 1921.
154. Vielhauer, *On the "Paulinism" of Acts*, op.cit., p 38-43.
155. That Luke has undermined the Pauline principle is questioned by F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles, The Greek text, and Marshall, Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 189-190.
156. Conzelmann, *Theology*, op.cit., p 145-149.
157. See p 143 above, note 258.
158. Mercurio, op.cit., p 144; W.H. Harrington, *The annunciation*, op.cit., p 306-315.
159. Leon Morris, *Luke*, op.cit., p 84.
160. See p 146-150 above.
161. Marshall, *Luke Historian*, op.cit., p 138-144; Guthrie, op.cit., p 84-86.
162. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 467.
163. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 467, note 67.
164. Brown, *Birth*, op.cit., p 467, note 68.
165. Adolf Harnack, see p 284 above, note 136.



166.

Ellis, *'The role of the Christian Prophets in Acts'*, op.cit., p 55-67, and his more comprehensive work, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, op.cit., and David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*.

The definition of the prophetic function is Hill's primary interest. Having examined other suggestions he proposes the following definition,

*A Christian prophet is a Christian who functions within the Church, occasionally or regularly, as a divinely called and divinely inspired speaker who receives intelligible and authoritative revelations or messages which he is impelled to deliver publicly, in oral or written form, to Christian individuals and/or the Christian community (p 8-9).*

This definition, with which we concur, does not specifically mention exhortation. However, Hill is here concerned with defining the activity, rather than the content of the prophets ministry. When he comes to examining the content of this ministry he sees exhortation as the major factor, amongst others. In his study of the content of prophetic elements in the Apocalypse he comments that *'Exhortation and encouragements are given to believers to remain faithful'* (p 86). This is one of two elements he finds in the area of content. He concludes his examination of the prophetic ministry in Acts by stating, *'The chief function of these prophets appears to be of a pastoral kind: they offer paraklesis to the disciples in order to strengthen them in their faith'* (p 188).

His treatment of Paul's epistles comes to the same conclusion. The words found in 1 Cor. 14.3 *'provide the nearest approach in Paul's letters to a definition of the prophetic function...'* (p 123). This definition has links with Paul's own prophetic ministry as stated in 1 Thess.2.12. This type of preaching is exhortatory, *'it constantly refers back to the work of salvation as its presupposition and basis... it contributes to the guidance, correction, encouragement - in short, the oikodome of the community'* (p 128). Consequently, *'Ellis may well be right in suggesting that paraklesis has a special connection with Christian prophecy, even when that connection is not explicitly stated'* (p 129). This broadly paraenetical function of N.T. prophecy has links with the Old Testament Deuteronomic tradition of prophecy (p 129). It also continues elements of the prophetic tradition of Amos, Jeremiah and others (p 133).

It is this exhortatory element which then leads Hill to suggest that the *'epistle'* to the Hebrews may be regarded as a type of prophetic homily, and that there may well be substance to the tradition which associates Hebrews with Barnabas. Here we notice that the Christology of Hebrews *'is being used as a means of supporting the exhortation'* (p 142). This has links with the prophetic use of Christology which we have deduced from the infancy narratives.

Hill's study shows wide interest in prophecy throughout the N.T. As he comments,

*there is scarcely a significant strand of tradition in the New Testament corpus that has not - in the view of some scholar - a greater or lesser measure of relatedness or indebtedness to Christian prophetic activity. The question of the correctness of the various claims will go on being asked, if not definitely answered, for a long time to come. (p 158-159)*

This is precisely the question which we have examined in regard to the infancy narratives. His work underlines the fact that prophetic influences may be found in more strands of the N.T. than traditionally anticipated.

We would differ from Hill in his use of language at one point. He refers to '*pastoral exhortation*'. We question the wisdom of using the word '*pastoral*' to refer to prophetic activity. He obviously wishes to denote the application or prophecy within the church rather than beyond it, as is evident from his definition. While we agree with this the use of '*pastoral*' confuses the prophetic function with that of the pastorate (elder, overseer, shepherd), and Hill would certainly agree that the prophets of the early Church are to be distinguished from the local eldership. It is therefore preferable to speak of '*prophetic exhortation*' in the context of the worshipping community of the Church.

An argument which might be used against this view of prophecy may be that it depends, in some measure at least, upon evidence from Acts, and in terms of Conzelmann's understanding of Acts references to prophetic activity are theologically rather than historically motivated (Colin Brown, *NIDNTT*, Vol 3, p 86). Those who hold this type of view as to the historicity of Acts therefore tend to have a different concept of early Christian prophecy, e.g. E. Käsemann, '*Sentences of Holy Law in the N.T.*', *op.cit.*, p 66-81, or Eduard Schweizer, '*Observance of the Law and Charismatic Activity in Matthew*', p 213-230. The ministry of the prophet is understood in terms of the imminent expectation of the parousia. The prophet brings the future, immanent judgment of God into the immediate present by utterances of judicial sentence or perhaps encouragement. He either blesses or curses. The emphasis, however, seems to fall on judgment.

Thus understanding of prophecy is firstly not in agreement with the Pauline concept. The Pauline concept has more in common with the one found in Acts than with the view just mentioned. Secondly, this understanding of Luke-Acts is itself theologically, or even philosophically motivated, and we have given reasons to question its assumptions (see p        above). Further a theological motivation in the case of Luke need not exclude an historical one, as Marshall has indicated, *Luke, Historian and Theologian*, *op.cit.*

For another view of prophetic ministry similar to Ellis, reference may be made to Paul B. Watney, *Ministry Gifts: God's Provision for Effective Mission*, A dissertation presented to the School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth, Fuller Theological Seminary, p 183-192.

167. Ellis, '*The role of Christian prophets*', *op.cit.*, p 55, note 3, where he says this is '*probable*'.
168. Compare Acts 15.23-29 with Melito's utterance recently discovered in the Homily of the Pascha, quoted by Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, p 201-202 and note 33. Hill suggests that its structure is closer to that of the teacher than the prophet, *Prophecy*, *op.cit.*, p 106.
169. Heinz Joachim Held, in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, *op.cit.*, p 239-240, also 237-241.
170. Kari Barth, *Church Dogmatic*, *op.cit.*, p 192-197 and see p 71-73 above.
171. Marcian Strange, '*King Herod the Great as a Representative Role*', p 188-193. See also Filson, *Matthew*, *op.cit.*, p 57.

172. Brown, *'The Meaning of the Magi; The Significance of the Star'*, p 580-581 and Birth,op.cit., p 182-183.
173. P.A. King, *'Matthew and Epiphany'*, p 93.
174. Gerhard Barth, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*,op.cit., p 58-164 and especially p 62-75, 159-164.
175. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 1975, p 81-83 especially p 83 quoting E.P. Blair, *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew*.
176. Guthrie, op.cit., p 20-21.
177. Brown, *'The Meaning of the Magi'*, op.cit., p 581.
178. Filson, *Matthew*,op.cit., p 57.
179. G.E. Ladd, *A Theology of the N.T.*,op.cit., particularly p 68-69 above.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER SIX.

1. See p 121-122 above.
2. See p 186-201 above.
3. See p 243-250 above.
4. See p 250-252 , and especially chapter five, note 166 above.
5. E.E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, op.cit., p 52-59.
6. Ellis, *Prophecy*, op.cit., p 58.
7. Ellis, *Prophecy*, op.cit., p 160.
8. Ellis, *Prophecy*, op.cit., p 23-44.
9. Ellis, *Prophecy*, op.cit., p 172.
10. Ellis, *Prophecy*, op.cit., p 181.
11. See treatment of each pericope in Chapter 4.
12. See p 118-119, 125-126, 135-136, 146-150, 153-154 above.
13. Ellis, *Prophecy*, op.cit., p 153, note 20. Hill shows that prophets did make use of existing traditions and basically supports Ellis in his idea of midrashic exegesis as a prophetic-charismatic phenomenon. The use of traditional material by prophets is evident from the Apocalypse ( *Prophecy*, op.cit., p 84, 129-130). He finds Ellis's reasons for regarding Paul's sermon in Acts 13. 16-41 as prophetic midrash '*less than convincing*' (p 105). However the general prophetic use of the Qumran type of eschatological-charismatic exegesis is supported by Hill in the case of Philip ( Acts 8.29f, p 100), and especially in Hebrews ( p 143-146).
14. See p 96, 202-206 above.
15. Hill notes at various points how the gift of prophecy was associated with the ability to interpret history according to divine revelation. This concept is reflected in 2 Chron. 13.22, the writings of Josephus (Hill, *Prophecy*, op.cit., p 27), and the Apocalypse ( p 74), '*The Christian prophet functions as an interpreter of events in history*' ( p 91).
16. A further point may also be significant. The Lucan infancy narrative is prophetic in the sense that it assumes a *Sitz im Leben* in the worship services of the early Christian community. These elements have been noticed by Minear, '*The Interpreter*', op.cit. According to David Hill, the prophets of the early church normally exercised their ministry in the context of worship. He deduces this from his examination of the Apocalypse ( *Prophecy*, op.cit., p 90), the role of Philip's daughters in Acts ( p 107), the linguistic structure of 1 Thess. 5.20 ( p 120), and Paul's description of this function in 1 Cor. 14.12 ( p 126, 128, 138). Two lines of investigation, by two different scholars, converge in the prophetic nature of the Lucan infancy narrative.

17. Minear, *'The Interpreter'*, op.cit.
18. David Hill, *'On the evidence for the creative role of Christian prophets'*, op.cit., p 262-274. For a recent discussion on prophets in the N.T. see Colin Brown, NIDNTT, Vol 3, p 84-89. For the opposite view see Käsemann, *'Sentences of Holy Law in the New Testament'*, p 66-81. If the Johannine tradition is related to the prophetic function one must of course speak of some measure of creativity. However the Johannine tradition should probably be seen as in a class of its own, and does not reflect what we have found to be the normal expression of prophetic ministry.
19. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, op.cit., p 148-150, 182-187.
20. See p 218-219 above.
21. See p 208 above.
22. Johannes Weiss, op.cit.
23. R.Maddox, *'The sense of New Testament Eschatology'*, p 42-50, see p 49, 50.
24. Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, op.cit., p 64-65.
25. Weiss, op.cit.
26. Weiss, op.cit., p 78.
27. Albert Schweitzer, op.cit., A survey on this whole issue is given by Ladd, *Presence*, op.cit., p 3-42, by Colin Brown, NIDNTT, *'The Parousia and Eschatology in the N.T.'*, Vol 2, p 901-931; see also Marshall, *'Slippery Words 1. Eschatology'*, p 264-269.
28. For a useful survey of Dodd's work see F.F.Bruce, on *'C.H.Dodd'*, p 239-269.
29. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfilment*, *Studies in Biblical Theology*.
30. Kümmel, *Promise*, op.cit., p 241.
31. Ladd, *Presence*, op.cit., p 38.
32. Conzelmann, *Theology*, op.cit.
33. Richard H. Hiers, *'The problem of the delay of the parousia in Luke-Acts'*, p 145-155.
34. Fred O.Francis, *'Eschatology and history in Luke-Acts'*, p 49-63.
35. Ellis, *'Present and future eschatology in Luke'*, p 26-41. The date of these various articles is not significant. We are merely noting the existence of the thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis in recent scholarly comment on Lucan eschatology.
36. Discussed by Colin Brown, *'The parousia and eschatology in the N.T.'*, NIDNTT, Vol.2, p 919-921.
37. See p 211-220 above.
38. See p 196, 212 above.

39. See p 212 above.
40. Ladd, Presence, op.cit., p 105-121.
41. Weiss, op.cit., p 73.
42. See p 104-107, 202-206, 209-210 above.
43. See p 209-210 above.
44. See p 255-257 above.
45. Lobstein, op.cit.
46. Dibelius, op.cit.
47. Bultmann, History, op.cit.
48. Von Campenhausen, op.cit.
49. Brown, Birth, op.cit., p 29-32.
50. Gore, op.cit., p 16.
51. Harnack, Date of Acts, op.cit., p 155-156 and p 284, note 136 above.
52. So with Orr, Machen, and Winter, p 293f above.
53. Discussed by Colin Brown in *'The parousia and eschatology in the N.T.'*, NIDNTT, Vol 2, p 927-930.
54. See p 202-220 above.
55. Ladd, Presence, op.cit., p 26.
56. See p 220-223 above.
57. See p 220-236 above.
58. The word '*consistent*' is not being used here in the sense it usually carries in association with the ideas of Schweitzer. We use it according to its usual English meaning.
59. G.R.Beasley-Murray, *'New Testament Apocalyptic - A Christological Eschatology'*, p 317-330, see p 318-319.
60. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus God and Man, op.cit., p 143.
61. See above p 12-14 and p 178-180.
62. See p 227-229 above.
63. See p 227-229 above.
64. See p 231- 233 above.
65. See p 131, 233 above.

66. R.Maddox, *op.cit.*, p 48-49.
67. See p 175-178 above.
68. Wolfhart Pannenberg in *New Frontiers in Theology, Vol.III, Theology as History* *op.cit.*, p 244.
69. J.W.Montgomery, *Shape*, *op.cit.*, p 35.
70. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, *op.cit.*
71. See p 69-88 above.
72. J.Massingberde Ford, *'Zealotism and the Lucan Infancy Narratives'*, p 280-292.
73. See on Winter p 293f above, and on Davis p 112 above and notes. It may not be coincidental therefore that Hill has suggested a similar area and period for various prophetic strands he finds in other parts of the N.T. He believes that J.A.T. Robinson's redating of the N.T. books may be correct in the case of the Apocalypse, which Robinson dates around A.D. 68-69. Hill suggests that the churches in Asia Minor may owe their prophetic characteristics to the fact that they were founded by *'Jewish-Christian refugees from Palestine who left their country before or shortly after the catastrophe in A.D. 70'*. This influence would then be traced back to *'a period when the spiritual and prophetic element still had a leading voice both theologically and constitutionally'* (*Prophecy*, *op.cit.*, p 218, 219, notes 1 and 2). Hill notes that R.A. Edwards has proposed that the Q tradition should be understood in terms of eschatology, prophecy and wisdom, and arose in *'Northern Palestine or Syria in the decade 40-50'* (p 153). Hill feels that Edwards is probably correct in seeing a marked prophetic influence in the Q tradition (p 153-154). He feels that some validity may be found in the view that Matthew's redaction shows marks of a particular interest in prophetic ministry (p 154-156), and Eduard Schweizer comes to similar conclusions, *'Observances of the Law and Charismatic Activity in Matthew'*, p 213-230. If the earlier dating of Matthew's gospel, or rather, the sources behind Matthew's gospel is correct, this would add to the list of prophetic type sources arising in the area of Syria-Palestine prior to A.D. 70. Add to this the evident prophetic elements in Luke-Acts, and a similar earlier dating for the sources behind Luke-Acts, and one arrives at the possibility of five or six narratives in the N.T. which show signs of prophetic influence emanating from Syria-Palestine before A.D. 70, namely,
  1. The tradition behind the Apocalypse.
  2. Q.
  3. M.
  4. L.
  5. Matthew's infancy narrative.
  6. Luke's infancy narrative.

The last two could not of course have arisen in exactly the same area. The differences over the residence of the family of Jesus and the chronological difficulty over the journey to Egypt and return demonstrate that the tradition must have been transmitted through different channels. However Syria-Palestine included a large area with various forms of primitive Christianity (Jerusalem, Samaria, Antioch), and the traditions could have been moulded in significantly different environments. The point is that a wide phenomenon of prophetic activity seems to be evident from this general area during the period before the fall of Jerusalem which can account for the similar elements which we have discovered in both infancy narratives.

74. See p 112-114, 158-163 above.
75. See p 168-173 above.
76. See p 168-173, and chapter four above on each pericope.
77. See p 173-175 above.
78. See p 101,103-104 above.
79. See p 410 above.





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